

SECTION I, NARRATIVE

CHAPTER III

OPERATIONS FROM 1 NOVEMBER TO 30 NOVEMBER

114. Beginning with the month of November the affairs of the Officers Mess and Club were conducted by an augmented council headed by Colonel Kingsley S. Andersson, CE. (79)

115. On 1 November the designation of NATO was changed to MTO (Mediterranean Theater of Operations). The area of the new theater was the same except that SWITZERLAND and FRANCE were excluded. (80)

116. On the same day there was received a list of units transferred from NATOUSA to ETOUSA. So far as Sixth Army Group was concerned this change related to Administration, since operational control was already under SHAEF, and NATOUSA continued supply functions under the new designation MTOUSA, (Mediterranean Theater of Operations United States Army) which was effective 1 November. (81)

117. By this time elements of the 100th Infantry Division commanded by Major General Withers A. Burress were arriving in the zone of the Seventh Army with the mission of effecting the progressive relief of the 45th Division during the period 3-9 November. (82)

118. The front along the Franco-Italian border had been generally static during October but now certain changes became apparent. Enemy withdrawal in the coastal area had been forecast by G-2 for some time and was confirmed on 1 November when elements of the First Airborne Task Force advanced one to two miles against negligible resistance and occupied the towns of CASTIGLIONE, SOSPELLO and MOLINETTO. G-2's estimate was that the Germans were falling back to a position extending generally North from ST. REMO. G-2 also cited reports Italian partisans were gaining control of valleys in Northwestern ITALY. Snow depths at higher altitudes increased and German ski-patrols were observed. Italian fascist divisions previously occupying these areas were withdrawn to the Southeast to oppose the Fifth Army and as security forces along the coast. By 5 November some of our units, following up the enemy withdrawal on the South, had reached the FRANCO-ITALIAN Border. At this point their mission became purely defensive and, except for security patrols, no advance beyond the border was made. This defensive attitude in the South permitted maximum concentration of force in the North for more direct and decisive action against GERMANY. Moreover any crossing of the border in force had been prohibited by SHAEF. (83)

119. On 1 November new tables of allotment of grades and ratings were published. They totalled 361 Officers, 23 Warrant Officers and 949 Enlisted Men, an aggregate of 1333. (84)

120. As noted in paragraph 42, the Commanding General Sixth Army Group had been given Civil Affairs responsibility for the 31 departments of Southern FRANCE beginning 15 September. As of 1 November this responsibility was assumed by SHAET except within the army areas. (85)

121. The following is an extract from a message received from SCAF 3 November following informal conferences previously held. (86)

1. GENERAL: Under command of the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, a military operation will be conducted with the objective of opening the Port of BORDEAUX. The code name for this operation will be notified in our next cable.

2. COMMAND AND CONTROL: You will have responsibility for directing the planning and execution of this operation in accordance with instructions issued by this Headquarters, and you will also furnish the necessary operational support.

3. By appointment of the French Provisional Government, General DE LARMINAT commands all French forces operating in the HIATUS area West of the RHONE and South of the LOIRE. General DE LARMINAT will conduct this operation in accordance with orders and directives issued by your Headquarters.

4. In regards to the French internal security policy, guidance will be furnished General DE LARMINAT by the Provisional Government.

5. MISSION: To reduce the German pockets astride the GIRONDE Estuary so as to enable the Port of BORDEAUX to be opened by the French. Action will be taken to secure the Port of BORDEAUX and safeguard installations there as soon as possible.

6. ALLOCATION OF FORCES. NAVAL FORCES: Direct communication is authorized with Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force, in regard to such Naval assistance as may be made available on the ATLANTIC Coast in support of the operation.

7. GROUND FORCES: A French Task Force comprised of French Forces now under your command as you consider necessary, up to a Corps of 2 Divisions with supporting troops may be used for the operation.

8. AIR FORCES: Air support will be provided by the I Tactical Air Force (Provisional).

9. GENERAL: In selecting Naval, Ground and Air resources to be employed in these operations, French units will be used wherever possible..

10. TARGET DATE: Your aim will be to clear the enemy from astride the GIRONDE Estuary by 1 January 1945.

11. ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: Priorities and allocations; in accordance with the policy set up by SHAEF, the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, will be responsible for priorities and allocations of supplies and equipment in short supply between the French Task Force and the Sixth Army Group. If, in his judgement the availability of certain items becomes so restricted as to jeopardize the mission of the Task Force, he will report the matter, with appropriate recommendation, to SHAEF.

G-3 had already initiated plans for this operation (INDEPENDENCE) and on 4 November went to SHAEF for conferences with particular reference to the availability of certain French Colonial units for use in the required Task Force A. Preliminary plans included the use of a provisional Corps Headquarters, the 1st DB, the 1st DMI and a minimum of supporting troops. The line of communication was to be the SETE-BORDEAUX railway. The port of SETE, West of MARSEILLES was being swept of mines with 13 November as target date for availability. Certain interesting aspects of the situation relative to BORDEAUX are contained in the following extract from Appendix A to Fortnightly Counter-Intelligence Report No. 3, dated 4 November 1944:

"4. External threats to security are the German pockets at La Rochelle, Royan and Pointe de Grave which have an estimated strength (according to reports received by a C.I.C. officer from the 2me Bureau of the F.F.I. in Bordeaux) of 20,000, 12,000 and 7,000 respectively, all well armed and supplied and having high morale. These are opposed by French F.F.I. troops numbering about 13,000 in the La Rochelle area, 5,500 near Royan and 4,000 near Pointe de Grave. These troops are poorly armed and to a large extent lack combat training. They are commanded by General Petitbon. Another external threat is the presence of large Spanish forces on the border. Estimates of strength are not available as no American agents are permitted to operate in Spain. The Blue Division and the Spanish Condor Division are believed to be on the border and it is understood that Franco is steadily bringing up reinforcements. On the French side of the border there are an estimated 15,000 F.F.I. troops whom it is roughly estimated have one rifle for every three men. They are commanded by General Collet, commanding the 17th Region. In addition to these however there is a group of 4,000 Spanish Republicans who are well armed, well supplied and well disciplined. It is understood that Franco is kept informed by his agents in France of these Republican troops and of the activities of the several hundred thousand Spanish Republicans in the South of France who have organized the "National Union of Spain" the avowed purpose of which is to overthrow the Falangist

Government. It is rumored that Franco may be in negotiation with the German pocket forces for them to enter Spain in order to bolster his troop strength and help him to maintain his balance of power. If any substantial group of Germans should decide to move into Spain there is no adequate force presently in southwest France to stop them."

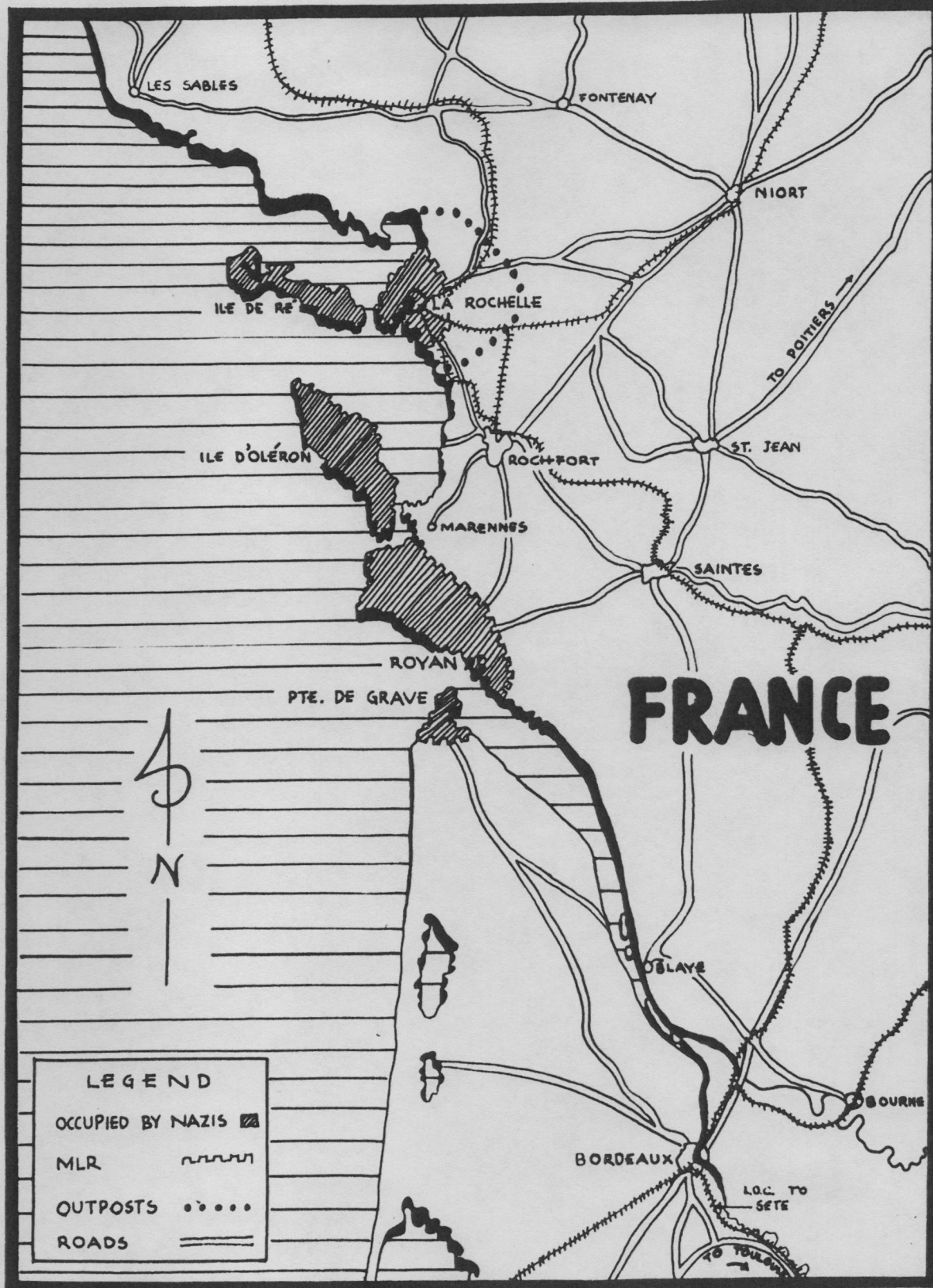
The above quoted extract is not offered as documented and verified history. There was apparently considerable movement of enemy troops from one position to another which made it impossible to secure any very reliable information as to strengths. G-2 had both U.S. and French estimates which differed widely. U.S. figures which included only combat effectives are shown in the table below. Locations are shown on the map.

Estimates of Enemy Troops--North of BORDEAUX

LOCATION	G-2 INTELLIGENCE (US)
LA ROCHELLE	8,000
ROYAN	5,000
POINTE DE GRAVE	5,000
ILE DE RE	3,000
ILE D'OLERON	4,000
TOTAL	25,000

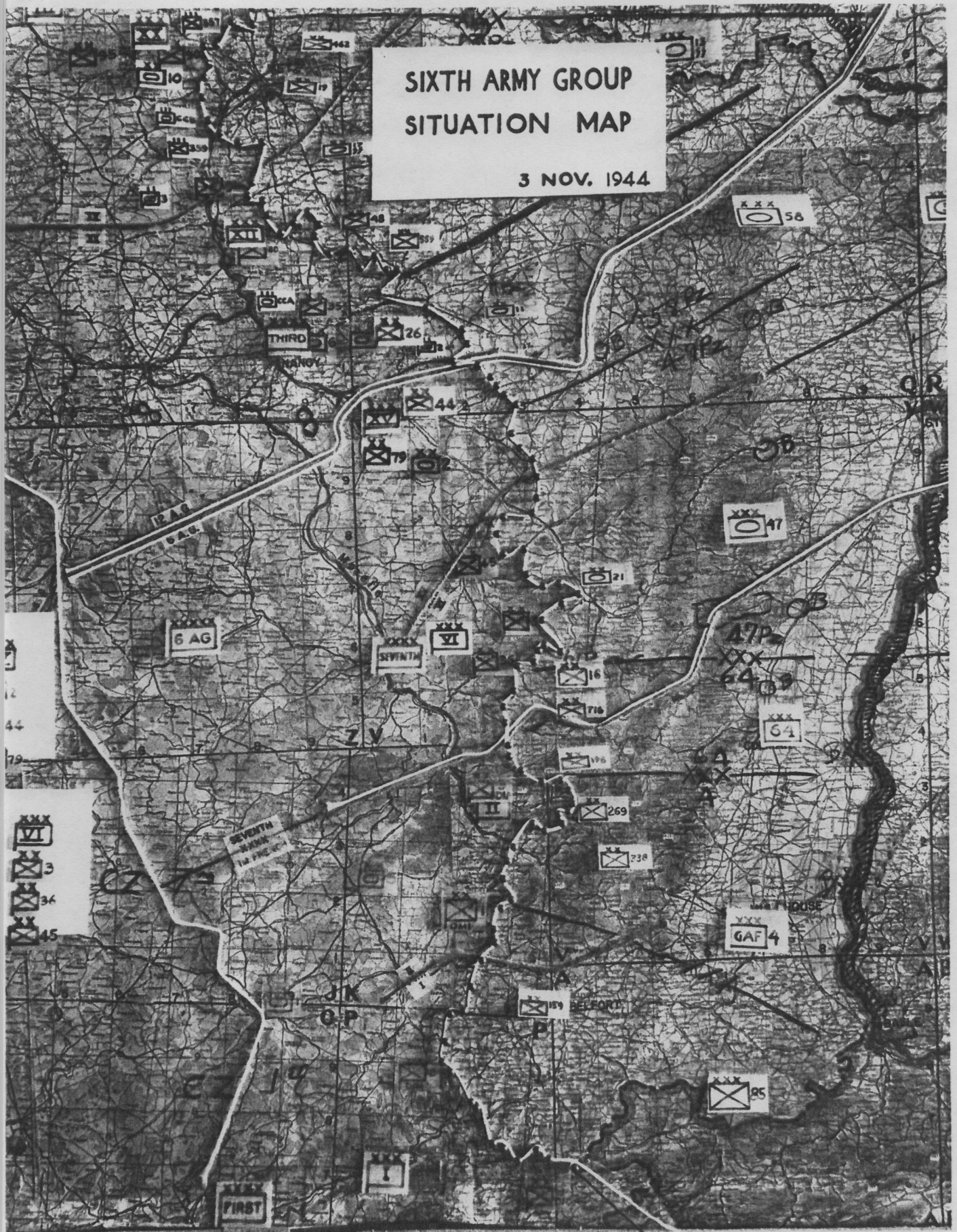
Estimates included a total of 270 guns, 35 tanks and 3 submarines. A few Goliath remote controlled tanks were reported. The LA-ROCHELLE area and POINTE DE GRAVES were provided with anti-tank ditches, mine-fields, concrete emplacements and pill boxes. One hundred and forty kilometers to the Northwest there were an estimated 30,000 enemy troops in the ST NAZAIRE area. Escape of the enemy garrison to SPAIN would provide access to the Port of BORDEAUX without fighting, and theoretically the Germans would be disarmed and interned in SPAIN. On the other hand the movement of this force for some three hundred kilometers across French territory would result in considerable damage and loss of life among French civilians. Actual disarmament and internment in Franco's SPAIN were considered unlikely and the arrival of this force there would add to the potential danger on the Spanish border. Moreover it would cause added trouble in the event SPAIN should be chosen as a refuge by high Nazi officials. Planning for Operation INDEPENDENCE included such provision as was practicable to prevent enemy escape. The 4th Zouaves had already been dispatched by the French to the BORDEAUX area and the 1st DB was out of the lines and could be moved at once in emergency.

NOV. 13, 1944
INFORMATION FROM G-2



SIXTH ARMY GROUP SITUATION MAP

3 NOV. 1944





THE SIXTH ARMY GROUP FRONT

G-2 6AG
SECRET
041200 A.NOV. 1944

LEGEND
FRONT LINE
FORTIFICATIONS
DIV. BOUNDARIES
STRONG POINTS

BRIDGES
DAMAGED
KNOCKED OUT
DATE: NOV. 4, 1944

150/NOV. 4/1/6AG. 6002

R.R. BRIDGES
HY. BRIDGES
FLOATING BRIDGES
TEMP. BRIDGES
SIEGFRIED LINE

REPRODUCED BY ORDER OF THE
JNT. CHIEFS OF STAFF
NOV. 44

Otherwise it was desirable to await establishment of the supply line from SETE. The garrison was reported to have little if any gasoline and therefore could not make a rapid dash. It was believed that the F.F.I. and the 4th Zouaves with strong air support could cause sufficient delay to permit intervention of the 1st DB and other units if necessary to prevent escape to SPAIN.

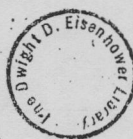
122. In order to prevent inflation and avoid hardship to the civilian population, on 6 November, General Devers issued an order prohibiting the buying of all rationed and controlled goods by troops for their own use except by agreement with French Territorial Department officials (Prefects). (87)

123. On 7 November the establishment of a Psychological Warfare Section was announced. Mr. James A. Clark (US Civilian) was designated Chief, and Major Homer E. Shields, Inf., as Administrative Officer. (88)

124. This same date Administrative Instructions Number 4 were issued as quoted below:

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP
APO 23, U. S. ARMY

ADMINISTRATIVE)
INSTRUCTIONS :
NUMBER 4)



7 November 1944

G-4 REPORTS

1. In conformance with paragraph 3a, Annex "D", letter this headquarters, file AG 322/1-0, dated 8 October 1944, subject: "Functions of Headquarters Sixth Army Group", G-4 Reports as outlined in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 below are requested as indicated. All previous instructions regarding submission of G-4 Reports are hereby superseded.

2. DAILY SUPPLY STATUS REPORT.

a. A report of the status of supply as of 1800 hours daily will be prepared by each army or separate command of the Sixth Army Group. This report will be submitted in a daily cable to reach this headquarters not later than 1200 hours the day following the period covered by report and will contain the information outlined in the attached proforma (Annex 1). An information copy of this cable will be sent to the section of the Communication Zone serving the command.

b. For convenience in transmission, the daily cable report will be submitted in form shown by the attached sample (Annex 1, Inclosure 1). Since correctness of entire report depends on proper

interpretation of message, no variations in the cable form will be attempted without prior approval from this headquarters.

3. WEEKLY G-4 PERIODIC REPORT.

a. Effective as of 2400 hours, 11 November 1944, a weekly G-4 Periodic Report conforming to the inclosed outline (Annex 2) will be submitted to this headquarters.

b. The weekly G-4 Report will cover the period from 0001 hours Sunday to 2400 hours of the following Saturday and will be dispatched so as to reach this headquarters by 0800 hours of the following Tuesday. Distribution will be as follows:

Original and two copies to this headquarters.
One copy to section of the Communication Zone
serving the command.

c. The sequence of the attached outline form (Annex 2) will be strictly adhered to.

4. In addition to the periodic report prescribed herein, it is desired that items in critical short supply and supply conditions likely to restrict operations be reported at the time of occurrence to this headquarters by the most expeditious means available, together with a statement of action taken thereon.

By command of Lieutenant General DEVERS:

/s/ J. L. TARR
J. L. TARR,
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

125. By 7 November the plans for the relief of the First Airborne Task Force (FABTF) had been somewhat altered. Whereas Amendment No. 1 to Letter of Instruction Number One (54) had directed relief by elements of the First French Army, the planned withdrawal of two divisions of this Army for operation INDEPENDENCE at BORDEAUX made it inadvisable to further weaken the First French Army zone. The new plans provided for relief of airborne elements only of the FABTF by 22 November, the relief of the 1st Special Service Force by 29 November. The balance of FABTF and attached units were to remain in the zone. Functions of Headquarters FABTF were to be taken over by the 44th AAA Brigade under Brigadier General Ralph C. Tobin. This brigade headquarters had been included in the DRAGOON troop list for late phasing. Details of the relief plans are covered in Operational Memorandum Number 3 quoted below:

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP
APO 23, U. S. ARMY

8 November 1944

OPERATIONAL MEMORANDUM)

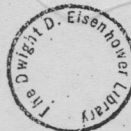
NUMBER

3)

1. Amendment No. 1 to Letter of Instructions Number One, Headquarters Sixth Army Group, dated 13 October 1944, is rescinded.

2. a. The following units of the First Airborne Task Force will be relieved from present assigned mission by troops made available by CG, 44th AAA Brigade:

Hq/Hq Co, 1st ABTF
517th Para Inf Regt
509th Para Inf Bn
1st Bn, 551st Para Inf Regt
550 AB Inf Bn
460th Para FA Bn
463rd Para FA Bn
887th AB Engr Co
596th Para Engr Co
512th AB Sig Co.



- b. CG, FABTF will effect the relief of the above-mentioned units in a deliberate manner, in increments and on a phased schedule to insure that the relieving troops are thoroughly familiar with the situation and their mission before the troops being relieved are withdrawn.
- c. Relief will be accomplished by 1800A hours 21 November, at which time command of the sector currently assigned CG, FABTF, will pass to CG, 44th AAA Brigade, now established as a separate command under this headquarters.
- d. As relieved, First Airborne Task Force units will be assembled in the NICE area to await further orders.
3. a. After passage of command, the 44th AAA Brigade will protect right (East) flank along FRANCO-ITALIAN Border South of line ALLOS-ST ETIENNE DE TINEE, both exclusive - CUNEO inclusive. Establish contact patrols with First French Army elements on the North. Rear Boundary will be announced in administrative letter to be issued later. (89)
- b. Commanding General, 44th AAA Brigade will establish contact with First Airborne Task Force without delay to effect relief of all elements of First Airborne Task Force listed in paragraph 2 a.

- c. The Commanding General, 44th AAA Brigade will submit to this headquarters for approval a list of the necessary personnel and equipment, and the justification thereof, that he desires to utilize, on a loan basis, from the 1st, 8th, 9th, 74th, 106th or 505th AAA Group Hq. and Hq. Batteries. This list will be kept to a minimum.
- d. Separate orders will be issued attaching units currently under operational control of First Airborne Task Force, except units listed in paragraph 2 a., to 44th AAA Brigade.
- e. Separate orders will be issued attaching the 899th AAA AW Bn (SM), the 19th, 62nd and 68th Armored Infantry Battalions of the 14th Armored Division and detachment Combat Command, 14th Armored Division, to 44th AAA Brigade.

4. Airborne Task Force will render last Operations Report as of 1200A hours, 21 November 1944. Thereafter, 44th AAA Brigade will render Intelligence Reports, Operations Reports, and periodic reports to this headquarters in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5, Operational Memorandum Number 2, this headquarters.

5. Instructions for relief and movement of First Special Service Force will be issued by this headquarters at a later date.

6. Upon assuming command of the sector, the Commanding General, 44th AAA Brigade, is subject to all previous instructions issued by this headquarters to the First Airborne Task Force. No change in current supply procedure.

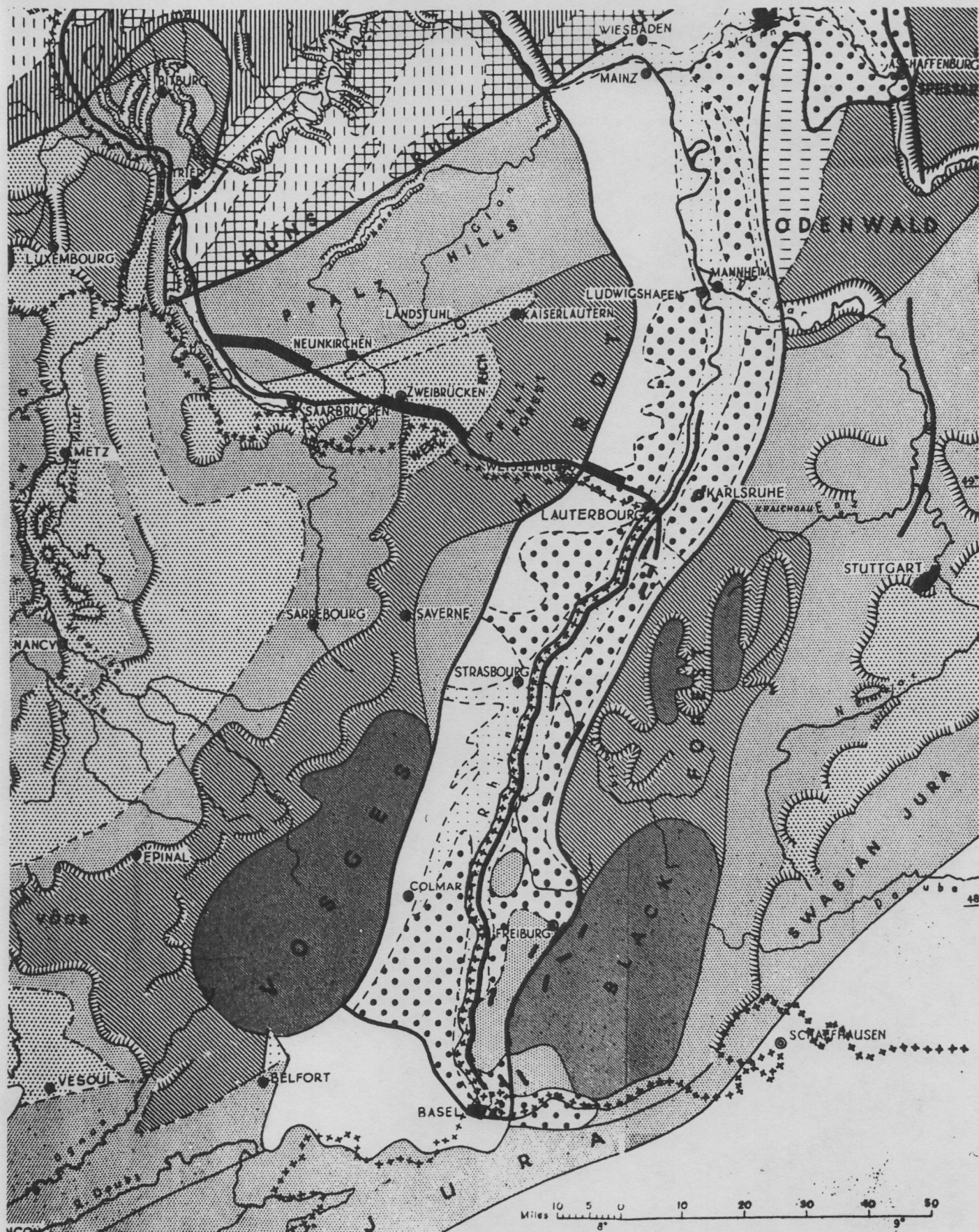
By Command of Lieutenant General DEVERS:

DAVID G. BARR,
Major General, G.S.C.,
Chief of Staff.

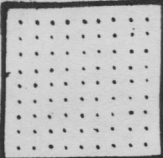
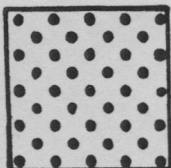
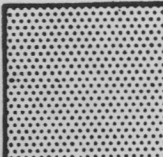
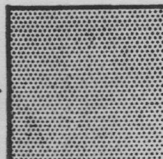
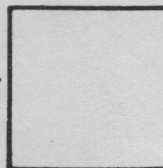
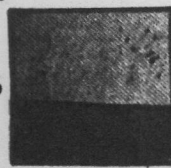
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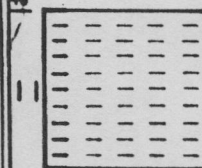
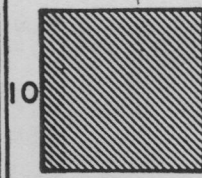
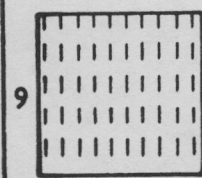
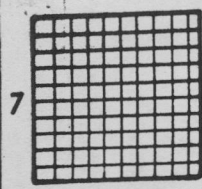
/s/ R. E. JENKINS
REUBEN E. JENKINS,
Brigadier General, G.S.C.,
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3.

The three armored infantry battalions listed in paragraph 3 above were considered an appropriate selection for attachment because their division, the 14th Armored, could not be made operational in the Seventh Army area until the last of November. The detachment of these battalions was regarded as a temporary expedient only, as they were shortly to be replaced by other units. Elements of the 422nd Regimental Combat Team were out of the line at this time and, as Seventh Army was very anxious to expedite the arrival of an armored combat command, it was agreed that the 100th Infantry Battalion of the 422nd RCT would be moved to the vicinity of NICE at once in place of the 62nd Armored



REFERENCE

- 1  RIVER FLOOD PLAINS -
cultivated in Lower Rhine Plain;
marsh, alder woods in Upper
Rhine Plain.
- 2  LOW PLAINS OF SAND & GRAVEL -
heath, peat bog in north; forest and
some cultivation in Upper Rhine Plain.
- 3  PLAINS WITH LOW HILLS - heavy
clays, streams, lakes; 50-70% arable,
some woodland.
- 4  UNDULATING OR HILLY - mainly open.
50-70% arable, some woodland.
(HERVE, is hedged pastureland; CONDROZ
has wooded ridges N.E. - S.W.)
- 5  OPEN, UNDULATING, ARABLE PLAIN -
Few streams; more than 70% arable,
Loams.
- 6  BLACK FOREST & VOSGES - high
plateau, deep valleys. Granites (800-1000m),
forested with cultivated clearings.



MIDDLE RHINE PLATEAU

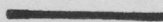
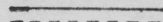
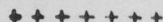



MIDDLE ALTITUDE PLATEAU - deep
valleys, (400-700m), all forest or bog.

LOW ALTITUDE PLATEAU - deep
valleys, (200-400m), 30-50% forest,
remainder cultivated.

PLATEAU - more fertile, undulating,
30-70% cultivated, remainder
forest.

DISSECTED PLATEAU of horizontal
sandstones, deep valleys, all forest.

LOW ALTITUDE CRYSTALLINE UPLAND,
30-50% arable

-  REGIONAL BOUNDARY
-  SUB BOUNDARIES
-  INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
-  GORGE
-  SCARP
-  SIEGFRIED LINE

Notes The Lowland from the frontier west of SAARBRÜCKEN
to KAISERLAUTERN including the coalfield is thickly
wooded.

Scarps are generally thickly wooded.

Infantry Battalion and that the 19th and 68th Armored Infantry Battalions would be relieved by the remainder of the 422nd RCT as soon as it could be brought to the NICE area.

126. During most of November adverse weather interfered very seriously with air support in the Sixth Army Group zone. Briefing officers from 1st TACAF explained that support was made more difficult because of the great distance from the front to the nearest practicable landing fields. These were in the LYON area over 200 miles to the South. Many valuable opportunities with good visibility over the target area were lost because of bad weather at LYON preventing take off, or fog so thick over the high country between LYON and the front that planes could not get through. There was also the disadvantage of reduced bomb loads and heavy consumption of gasoline. Advance landing fields would have been the answer, but with the extremely heavy rainfall they would have been seas of mud without steel planking. Plans had been made to meet this need but unfortunately for Sixth Army Group General Wilson had held up the shipping to FRANCE of aviation engineers and steel planking in order to facilitate any redeployment of the Tactical Air Forces that might be decided upon. (Doc #7)

127. By 10 November the newly arrived 100th Division had relieved the 45th Division and made an advance of one mile to the MEURTH South of RAON L'ETAPE.

128. On 10 November American press traffic started to flow direct from the Sixth Army Group Press Camp at BESANCON to America by RCA wireless telegraphy. French traffic to PARIS was by teletype. The work of the Public Relations Section had attained a considerable volume. For the week ending 10 November censorship activities involved a wordage close to 200,000 serving over 6,000 papers and agencies. Photographs were released for the service of over 200 papers and agencies, 133 radio programs were prepared, principally recordings. The four press conferences included one by General Devers. Other activities are outlined in the weekly report dated 14 November. (90)

129. On 11 November, with appropriate ceremony, General Devers presented the Bronze Star Medal to Mr. Warren G. Fugitt and Private Julian C. Dillard at the headquarters in VITTEL. (91)

130. On 15 November the appointment of Brigadier General Whitfield P. Shepard, USA, as Deputy Chief of Staff was announced. (92)

131. As a background for better understanding of plans and accomplishment, a brief review is presented of some of the influencing factors and conditions including terrain, weather and ammunition supply. In general, large mobile enemy units suitable for offense or large scale counter-attack were being replaced by less mobile formations suitable for static defense and delaying action. At the same time small armored units were provided to support their defense and assist

in local counter-attacks and raids. In physique, training and equipment many of these troops were below former standards. However these deficiencies were offset by natural defensive obstacles of terrain strengthened by carefully prepared and concealed defenses in depth. These defenses had been augmented during the enforced lull while supply lines were being established. In order to maintain defensive fire power with reduced personnel the enemy issued a greater proportion of individual automatic weapons, such as the machine pistol, thus increasing fire power at the very short ranges applicable to defense in woods. Deficiencies in training were countered by the stubborn bitterness with which many units would prolong a fight beyond the stage where their position was tactically hopeless. This attitude appeared to result from propaganda claiming that the consequences of defeat or surrender would be equivalent to, or worse than, death. It was reported to be a matter of grave concern to our troops that the lack of any published and authoritative plan for the treatment of post-war Germany gave full scope and effect to this powerful propaganda weapon. The terrain in the Vosges where the fighting was heaviest was very rugged and described as a wilderness of trees, rocks, mud and water. Snow covered ground made it very difficult if not impossible to approach hostile positions unobserved. Carefully compiled weather studies and maps were provided by G-2 and by the Engineer. A brief extract from a G-2 study is given below:

I. GENERAL

The appended statistics give pertinent weather data in the area south of MANNHEIM. It will be noted that rainfall is generally high, flying conditions are bad, and by November, the cloudy skies and unsettled weather or early winter prevail.

II. THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS. (See Appendices A and B).

1. Temperature

Winter weather prevails in the area during the months of November through March at altitudes of 3,000 feet and above, which are generally snow covered. At lower levels, snow does not lie on the ground for long periods. In the northern sector, where the mountains are lower, mild unsettled weather alternates with cold spells. Valleys generally have low night temperatures, causing fog which persists until late morning.

2. Precipitation

Although October is the wettest month of the year, the worst storms occur in late December and January. During November, skies are overcast a majority of the time.

3. Influence on Movement. (See Appendix A).

Roads over the summits of mountains are liable to be

blocked intermittently. Passes over 4,000 feet altitude are blocked for a period of four months or more. The Route des Cretes is completely snow-blocked for about five months.

More of this study is included in the Document File. Local inhabitants described current weather as the worst they had seen in the last ten years. (93)

132. At the daily staff conference 13 November it was announced by the Artillery and Ammunition sub-section of G-3 that ETOUSA had received a cable from the War Department to the general effect that artillery ammunition reserves in the United States were practically exhausted, that future shipments would have to come from current production, that this would provide only one-third the current day of supply and that material improvement at the front through increased production could not be expected before March 1945. Since the day of supply was based on the assumption that artillery units would spend a considerable portion of the time out of action, and in view of exhaustion of reserves and the fact that Sixth Army Group artillery was being kept continuously in action regardless of relief of Infantry units, it was estimated that the new basis for supply would provide not more than one-third of actual needs. This was the more serious because air support was habitually grounded by extremely adverse weather and could not be guaranteed in advance. Ammunition at the front for the mid-November attack had been carefully accumulated ever since about 10 October by avoidance of major attacks and frugality in normal use. It was considered unwise to handicap the current attack by directing reduction of artillery support as it was hoped that stocks accumulated and already allocated would carry through to about the first of the year. (37) Thus artillery support which had, up to this time, been seriously reduced due to lack of transportation, was shortly to be curtailed for lack of ammunition to transport. Available reserve stocks of the most essential calibers, 105mm and above, were non-existent either in AFRICA or ITALY. If the production program was based on the theory that use of air power would result in a reduction in the quantity of artillery ammunition needed, the actual effect was the opposite. Vital close support is mainly by artillery in any weather and, in adverse flying weather, entirely so. Allied command of the air served to extend the usefulness of air OP's which locate many more remunerative targets than were formerly found, and by insuring effective fire they increase the amount of artillery shell that can be used with profit. A brief picture of the situation as of 13 November is contained in the following paraphrased message from General Devers to General Eisenhower and General Bradley:

TO FOR ACTION: SHAEF FWD

FROM : SIXTH ARMY GROUP 13 November 1944

1. The weather on my front has been especially difficult since early October. Almost daily rains have reduced ordinarily good tank country to quagmire. Heavy clouds and fogs have per-

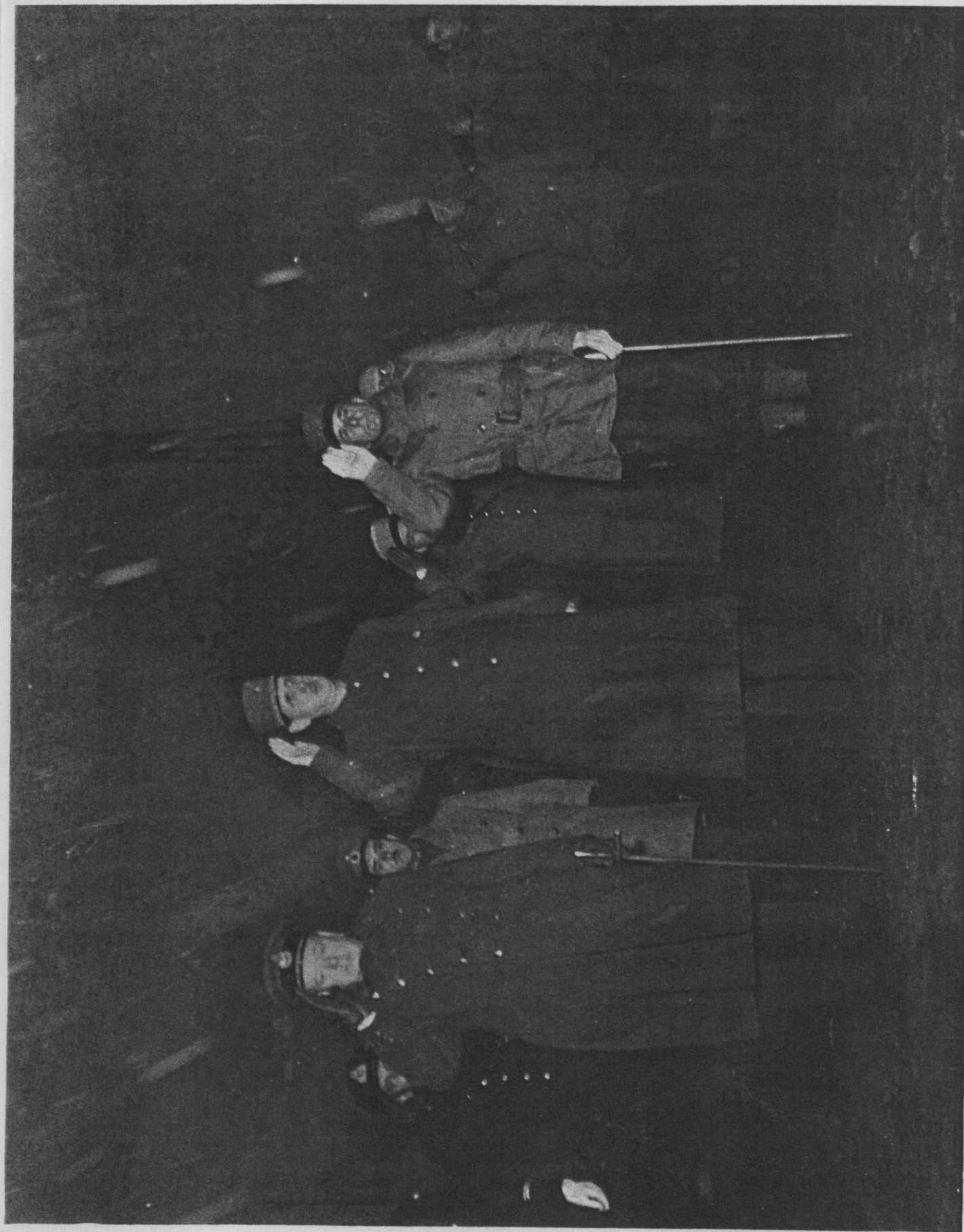
mitted the comparatively small Air Forces supporting my operations to operate only 14 days, and only 2011 sorties were possible since 15 October. Since the 1st of November this condition has been especially aggravated, frequent rains, light snows and sleet storms which have approached blizzards in the VOSGES area. The last 3 days final preparations for the attack this morning have been completed by commanders under the most adverse conditions. Practically all streams have over run their banks and many small lakes have been left by the receding waters, especially in the BELFORT GAP area. Movement of wheeled and tracked vehicles is limited to the roads.*

2. Late yesterday afternoon I completed my inspection of preparations for the attack making a final visit to the Headquarters of the I French Corps. I found the commanders confident despite the extremely adverse conditions under which the attack had to be launched, their troops of high morale and all anxious to get the job done.

3. The entire zone, this morning, is covered with $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches of snow in the open country and much deeper snow in the mountain regions. The clouds are over hanging and prevent air support from operating. The main attack with the XV Corps jumped off promptly at 0700 hours, following an artillery preparation conducted by phases throughout the night to destroy the hostile batteries, culminating in a short but violent bombardment of the hostile infantry positions this morning. The 79th and 44th Divisions are in the assault, the 79th having passed through 2nd French Armored Division. Each of these divisions has an Infantry Regiment in reserve ready to move by motor. The 2nd French Armored Division is being assembled in its present zone prepared to exploit a possible breakthrough or to follow the attack by bounds. The 45th Division will be passed to the XV Corps by Seventh Army. Its possible movement by motor is envisaged. The artillery of the 2nd French Armored Division is currently supporting the 79th Division while the artillery of the 45th Division is supporting the 44th Division. The attack of this corps is being backed by approximately 350 guns of all calibers, not including those of tank and tank destroyer units. A large proportion of the guns backing the VI Corps is deployed so that fire may be shifted to the front of the XV Corps. The last reports received concerning this attack indicate that it is meeting little opposition but is encountering a great number of anti-tank mines, anti-personnel mines and boobytraps, but is moving forward satisfactorily.

4. On the VI Corps front elements of the 100th Division

*To provide essential cross-country transportation under such conditions, request had been made for 1000 M-29 Cargo Carriers but sufficient time for delivery had not elapsed.



East of the MEURTHE River jumped off concurrently with the XV Corps and are advancing East and Southeast. Action by elements of the 3rd Division and of the 100th Division along the West bank of the MEURTHE is limited to fire action and a positive threat. The 3rd Division has only 1 regiment in the line at this time, the other 2 being assembled in rear areas for special training in River Crossing Operations which will be launched across the MEURTHE in a few days. The 103rd Division, which has just completed the relief of 2 regiments of the 3rd Division and of elements on the North flank of the 36th Division, has taken command of its zone of action and passed to the offensive this morning at 0700 hours for the purpose of capturing the high ground South of ST DIE and West of the MEURTHE. Satisfactory progress is reported. The 36th Division, making its main effort on its left, passed to the offensive concurrently with the 103rd Division in an effort to reduce the GERARDMER Salient. This action is a continuation of its satisfactory attack of yesterday.

5. On the front of the II French Corps offensive action is restricted largely to fire action and minor limited objective attacks designed to hold enemy reserves on that front. The character of the terrain, the extent of hostile defenses and the broad frontages held by the French Troops definitely limit offensive action in this corps sector.

6. The attack of I French Corps to breach the BELFORT GAP has not yet been launched. It is hoped that conditions may improve enough by this afternoon to permit the launching of at least its secondary effort by the 9th Colonial Division.

7. With the First French Army is my personal Liaison Officer for the purpose of observing developments.

133. With reference to this attack ordered by Letter of Instructions Number Two, dated 28 October, the announcement of 13 November as "D" day was made in secret letters delivered to the commanding generals of the First French Army and the Seventh Army in person. (94)(95) Seventh Army elected to attack at 0700 hours. The date and hour of the First French Army attack were the subject of several changes of plan. The level of the rivers in his zone of attack was a matter of considerable concern to General de Lattre and on 10 November he requested permission to defer his attack in case the water stages remained unfavorable. (95) General Devers granted this request that night. However, by 12 November the level of the streams was such that General de Lattre felt they would not interfere with the attack on the original "D" day, and so he did not plan to make use of his permission for delay. (95) But when the 13th dawned with a raging blizzard General de Lattre withheld announcement of "H" hour and about noon Colonel Lodge, who was General Devers personal Liaison Officer, learned that he did not intend to attack that day. (95) It happened that the British Prime Minister and General de Gaulle chose this same day for an official visit with General de Lattre whose honors to these distin-

guished guests included a large review of combat troops at MAICHE.(95)

134. During the evening Colonel Lodge talked with General de Lattre stressing General Devers' desires and views relative to the importance of the French attack as an essential part of the Sixth Army Group operations. Also he reiterated the carefully checked G-2 estimates of the limited enemy forces defending the BELFORT GAP. The following morning, 14 November, General de Lattre directed that the attack, already planned in detail, be launched at noon that day. (95)

135. French success was due in part to carefully planned deception and the attainment of such complete surprise as is rarely achieved. It wasn't just that the German command did not expect an attack. They were entirely convinced that there would and could be none. Completeness of surprise was evidenced by the note book of General Oschmann, the local German commander, who was killed in forward positions by the opening barrage. Further evidence came from his captured aide and from the removal of two German Corps commanders for failure to appreciate the situation and take suitable counter-measures. It appears that the following factors contributed to surprise; the normal appearance of a relatively quiet front, plans for departure of French units for Western FRANCE, troop movements for the Prime Minister's review, the cold and snow and the fact that when Seventh Army attack jumped off on the 13th the French appeared to be making no preparations at all for attack but to be deeply concerned with other affairs. Subsequent events proved the G-2 estimate of enemy order of battle and combat strength to be remarkably accurate.

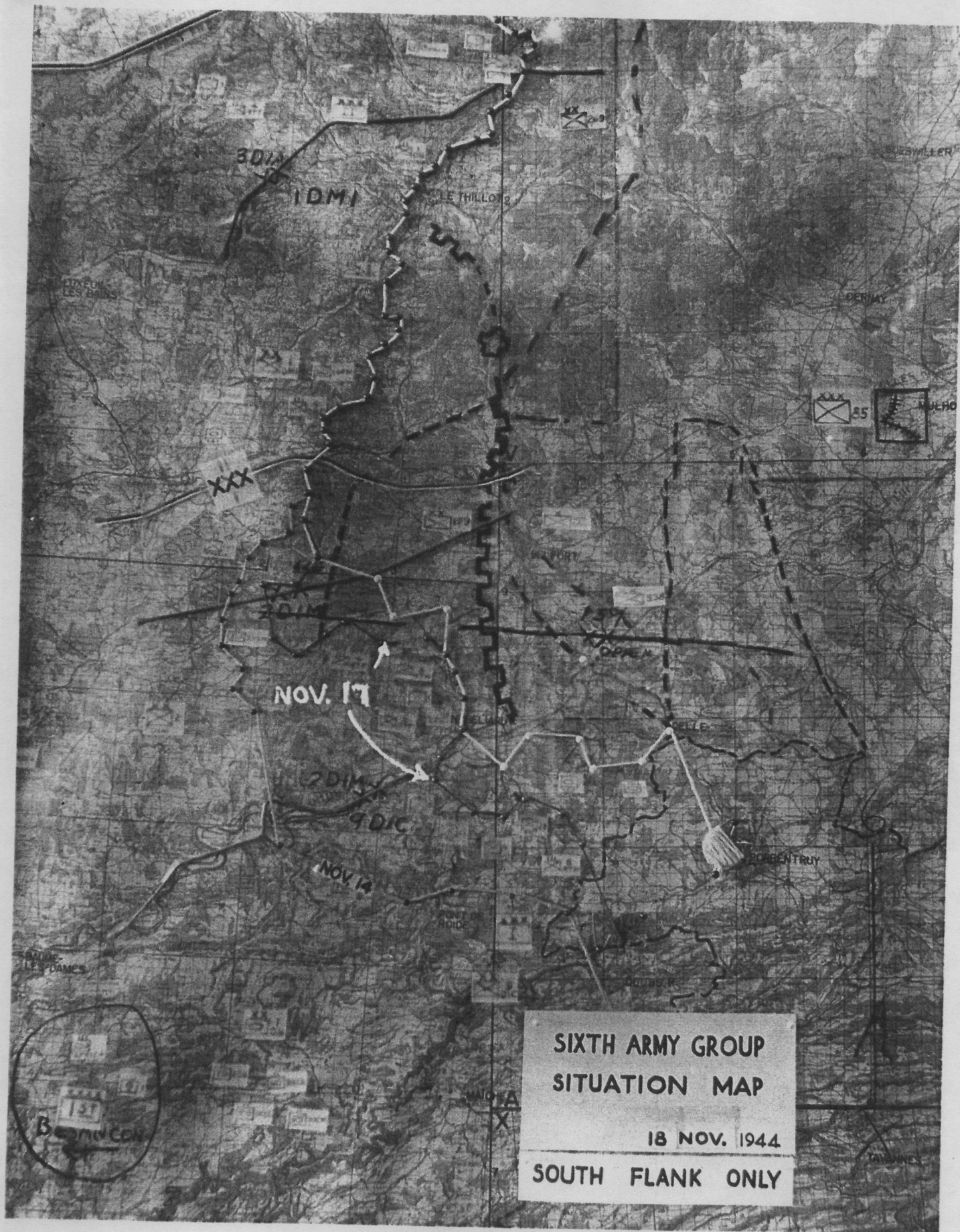
136. During the course of the mid-November attack the weather improved and substantial gains were made wherever pressure was applied. It was on the right, in the zone of the I French Corps that the initial advance was greatest. To add encouragement for continuation of this splendid drive General Devers on 17 November sent an official message of congratulations to General de Lattre as follows:

TO FOR ACTION: FIRST FRENCH ARMY

FROM : SIXTH ARMY GROUP 17 November 1944

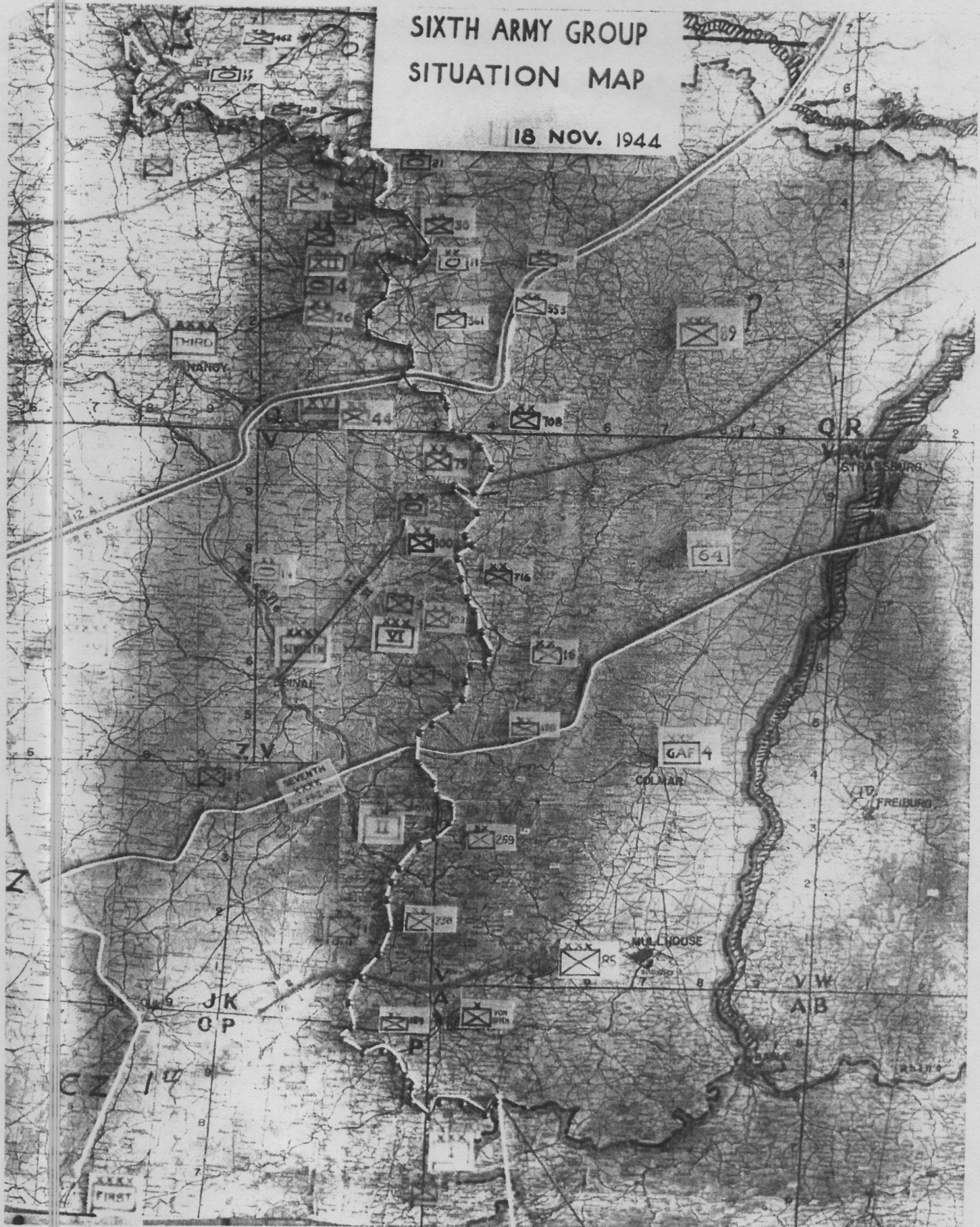
I offer my hearty congratulations on the present successful offensive of the First French Army. Your advance from the line of November 15 has now reached HERICOURT, although launched under the worst weather and terrain conditions imaginable. You threaten the historic Fortress of BELFORT and that ALSATIAN plain to which it is the gateway.

Please extend my congratulations, for their able leadership, to General BETHOUART, Commanding I French Corps, to General MAGNAN, Commanding 9 DIC, to General CARPENTIER, Commanding 2 DIM, to General De VERNEJOU, Commanding 5 DB, to the Commanders of the 1 DB Combat Command, 6 RTM, 9 Zouaves and the Commanders of all other echelons.



SIXTH ARMY GROUP SITUATION MAP

18 NOV. 1944



I want especially to commend the Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Enlisted Men of your Army for their aggressive triumph over many obstacles. Surely the enemy can not stand much longer before such fighting spirit.

I express my satisfaction and my pride for your own vigorous leadership and the careful planning of your staff.

May this splendid French Army continue to be thus worthy of the most glorious traditions of its past! And may it thereby be a mighty instrument for the complete liberation of FRANCE and the crushing defeat of the Germans! May your advance go on!

137. As you, the reader, note the rapid progress of the armies shown by the situation maps for the latter half of November, and read the several congratulatory letters to commanders concerned, you will realize that you are being offered the briefest of glimpses of two extensive and splendid military operations, one by the Seventh Army and the other by the First French Army. Your interest will be aroused and you will almost inevitably wish for a written account explaining in some detail the capture of SARREBOURG, SAVERNE and STRASBOURG by Seventh Army and of BELFORT and MULHOUSE by the First French Army. You will wish to know the means and methods by which these far reaching results were achieved. The writer understands and shares your interest but can not satisfy it in this document which is, after all, only a history of the Headquarters of the Sixth Army Group. To attempt to cover adequately the operations of the armies would be to neglect the primary purpose of this history and result in the duplication of an effort which the armies and their included units are in a far better position to carry to a successful conclusion. We should find their accounts of these operations most absorbing. Other sources on information are listed in paragraph 61 f, page 17.

138. On 17 November General de LARMINAT issued orders covering the organization and functioning of the FORCES FRANCAISES DE L'OUEST (FFO) and announced transfer of its command post from PARIS to COGNAC at 1200 hours 13 November. (96)

139. During 18 November the I Corps of the First French Army made a seven mile advance through the BELFORT GAP between the SWISS Border and the RHINE-RHONE Canal. Moderate gains were made on other portions of the front. (97)

140. On the same day instructions were issued to staff sections relative to the use of the Supreme Commanders Redline radio network. (98)

141. The General Summary from Weekly Intelligence Summary Number 9 dated 18 November is quoted below:

In the face of Seventh US and First French Armies attack, the enemy's coherent defense is showing signs of deteriorating.

Some divisions have reached a dangerously low level of combat effectives and are candidates for withdrawal. The arrival of one new large unit and various smaller units, as well as a reshuffle of the enemy's disposition, does not seem to meet the emergency. Therefore, further substantial reinforcements will be needed to reestablish the required balance.

142. On 20 November instructions were issued concerning air defenses and levels of supply. (99)(100)

143. Plans for transfer of supply responsibility from AFHQ to ETOUSA are outlined near the conclusion of SACMED draft dispatch "The Invasion of Southern France" in the following paragraph:

Just prior to this transfer of administrative responsibilities decision was also reached as to the transfer of supply responsibility as well. Effective 20 November ETOUSA was to take over the administration of supply from NATOUSA. Effective that date H.Q. Southern Line of Communications ETOUSA was to be activated under General Larkin as Commanding General, and authorized to communicate direct with NATOUSA on matters pertaining to personnel and shipment of supplies from ITALY and NORTH AFRICA to Southern FRANCE and movement of shipping in the MEDITERRANEAN. Responsibility for the movement of shipping in the MEDITERRANEAN was to remain with NATOUSA and Commander-in-Chief, MEDITERRANEAN. Practically, this involved the transfer of a considerable part of SOS NATOUSA with its Chief, General Larkin, from NATOUSA to ETOUSA. Initially his new headquarters was to be located at CASERTA, and pending its removal to FRANCE an advance headquarters was to be established at DIJON.

The transfer was made effective 20 November substantially as indicated above.

144. An organization chart of the Headquarters was published on 20 November.

145. On 20 November, General Devers made an extended reconnaissance of the Seventh Army front, visiting command post of the Army, the VI and XV Corps and their divisions in the line. By observing and talking with officers and men of the smaller units along the front he gained first hand knowledge of the condition and morale of the troops. He returned with confidence in the ability of the Seventh Army to continue its splendid drive and break through the VOSGES barrier.

146. Also on 20 November, General Jenkins, G-3, accompanied by Colonel Fuller and Lieutenant Colonel Lodge, Chief of the Liaison Section, made an extended reconnaissance in the zone of the First French Army. In addition, the party had the mission of contacting General de Lattre to ascertain his plans and his estimate of how soon he could disengage and release the 1st DMI and the 1st DB for movement to BORDEAUX.

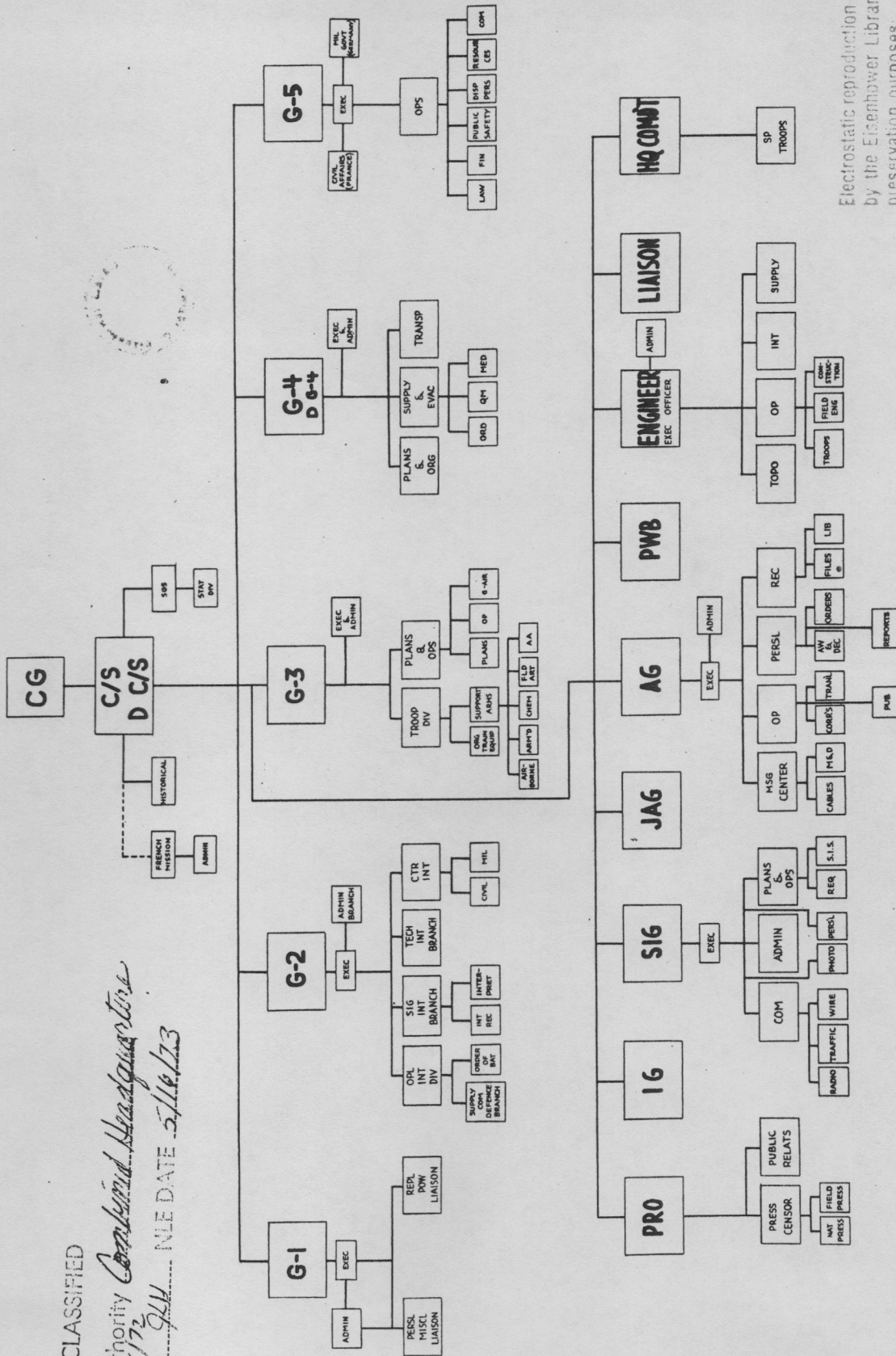
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SIX ARMY GROUP HQ

ORGANIZATION
AS OF 20 NOV 1944

DECLASSIFIED

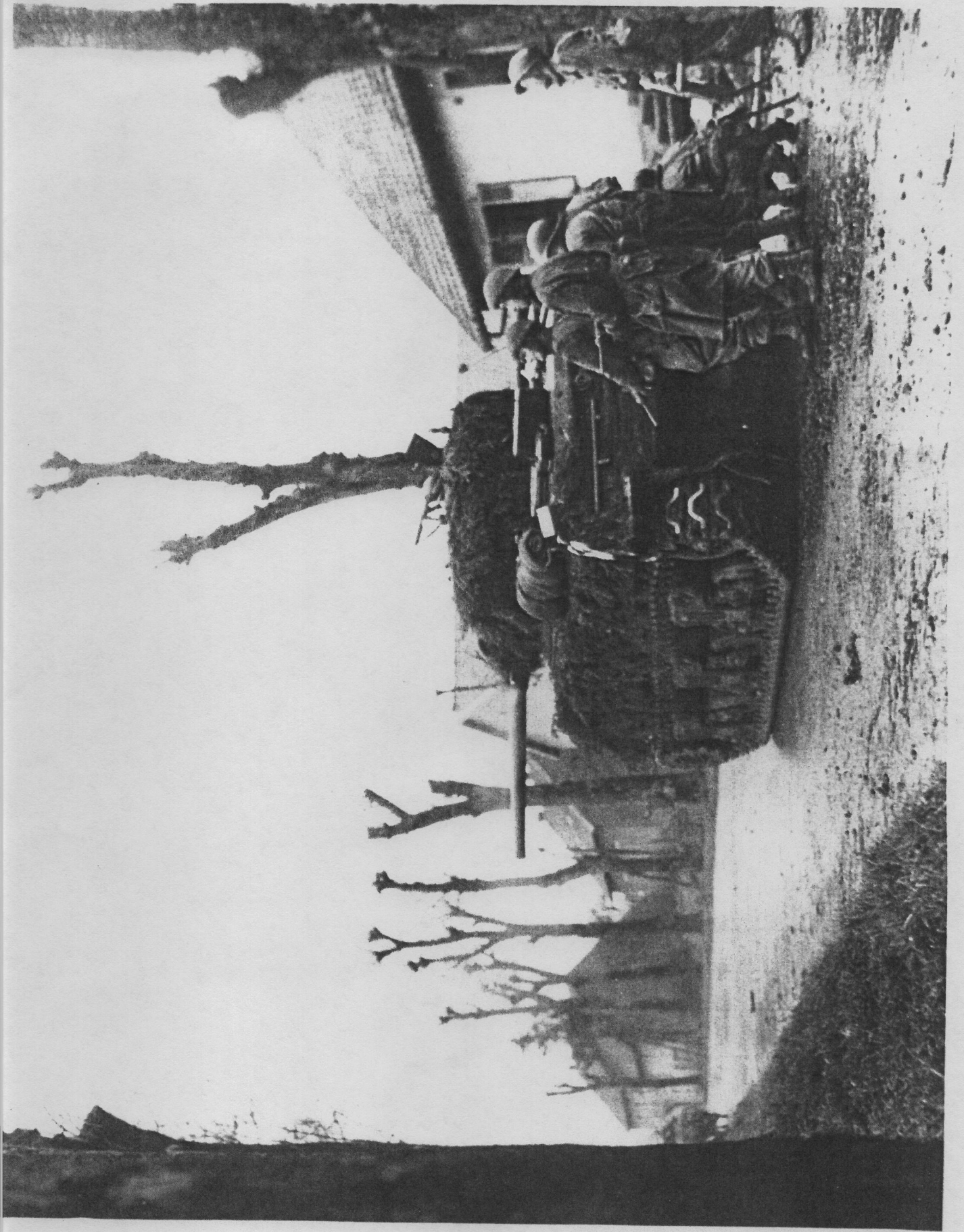
Authority *Combined Headquarters*
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REPRODUCED BY ENGR. SEC.
6TH ARMY GROUP HQ
NOV 44

STAT DIVISION
SGS 6 ARMY GROUP





**SIXTH ARMY GROUP
SITUATION MAP**

20 NOV. 1944

SOUTH FLANK ONLY

SIXTH ARMY GROUP SITUATION MAP

20 NOV. 1944



147. Prior arrangements for a meeting with General de Lattre at his advance CP in MONTBELLIARD shortly after noon failed to materialize, as the General was occupied elsewhere. The party then visited General Bethouart commanding the I Corps at his command post in BEAUCOURT, learning his current situation and plans, advising him of the situation to the North and what the Seventh Army expected to accomplish. Although the situation map for 20 November shows the front line as only a few miles beyond DELLE, the situation was rather fluid and it was possible to proceed Eastward all the way to ST LOUIS with little difficulty except from traffic which was very heavy because of the extra load imposed by the advance of the 5th DB. ST LOUIS is a French suburb of the SWISS city of BASLE. Most of the town was in the hands of a French motorized reconnaissance patrol but the enemy held the Eastern section beyond the canal. Hills of the BLACK FOREST were visible rising abruptly from the opposite bank of the RHINE.

148. General de Lattre expected to return to MONTBELLIARD for dinner but when the party arrived there it developed that General de Lattre had not returned and was not expected that night, but that he did have scheduled a press conference at BESANCON at 2230 hours. Heavy traffic, closed bridges, detours and blackout conditions extended a normal 75 kilometer trip until nearly midnight but arrival at BESANCON preceded General de Lattre's. After dinner, in the early hours of the morning, the conference was held and included Monsieur Andre' Diethelm, French Minister of War. Information and plans were discussed. Notwithstanding his very rapid and extended advance, General de Lattre still had plenty of unfinished business West of the RHINE. His mission called for exploitation of any opportunities to cross the RHINE and seize a bridgehead if this could be done against light opposition but no such opportunity was offered and the First French Army lacked the bridge equipment necessary to ensure a crossing in the face of normal opposition.

149. The delicate subject of detaching two fully committed divisions for operations elsewhere was introduced. It was conceded that it would be an error to jeopardize the current operation by pulling them out prematurely. General de Lattre appeared reconciled to relinquishing the 1st DMI but considered it unjust that he should be asked to give up the 1st DB also, when there was another French armored division, the 2nd DB, attached to the Seventh Army. In brief his idea was that if each of the Sixth Army Group armies loaned one division, neither would be hurt so much as his army would be if deprived of two divisions. In view of the rapidly changing situation no definite release date could be set. The party reached VITTEL at 0630 21 November. (40)

150. Since the First French Corps was the first to pass the VOSGES and reach the RHINE, it may be asked why greater strength was not poured in immediately behind the spearhead of its advance. It is pointed out that the initial advance was on a very narrow front with a limited road net. From observation of the congested traffic on these roads on 20 November it appeared that attempts to route addition-

al large units over them might well have caused a decrease rather than an increase in the speed and extent of the advance. (40):

151. On 21 November the following Order of the Day was published:

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP
APO 23, U. S. ARMY

ORDER OF THE DAY)

21 November 1944

NUMBER 1)

The First French Army, in a manner reflecting the highest credit on French Arms and traditions, has stormed and breached the main defenses of the Belfort Gap. This attack is progressing with outstanding successes. The enemy has been driven from Belfort and the intrepid French forces have pursued him relentlessly to the Rhine River. Another historic sector of France has been liberated.

The Seventh U. S. Army, increasing the weight of its blows, has surged forward. It has freed many French towns, seized Sarrebourg, crossed the Sarre River, and is exploiting to the Northeast with strong forces. With determination and courage, these troops are materially jeopardizing the enemy in his efforts to defend vital positions.

The First Tactical Air Force, composed of American and French units, after weeks of being handicapped by poor flying weather is supporting the attacks of the two armies in a decisive manner.

The successful attacks of both armies have been ably supported by the Supply Services, including the Base and Advance Sections, and the Military Railway Service of the Southern Line of Communication. Only by their unremitting efforts was it possible to procure and bring forward the vast quantities of supplies so vital to the success of the combat troops.

The noteworthy success of these operations has again revealed the superior leadership of our army commanders.

The mettle of each officer, noncommissioned officer and soldier of the American and French forces, both ground and air, has been shown by these operations. Their proven battle prowess is the strength of our armies.

Our attack continues. We will press on relentlessly to attain final victory.

/s/ JACOB L. DEVERS
JACOB L. DEVERS
Lieutenant General, U. S. A.
Commanding



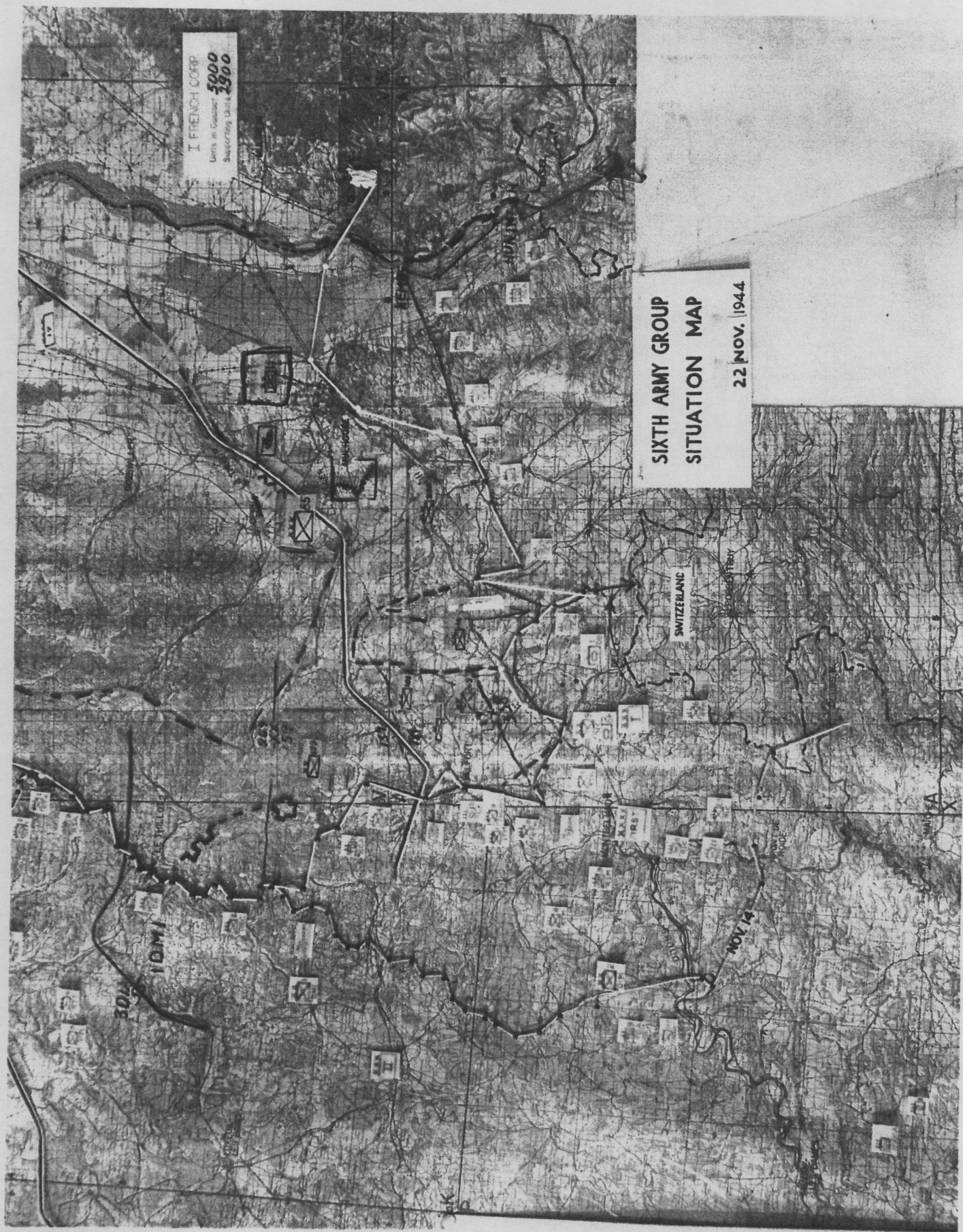
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SIXTH ARMY GROUP
SITUATION MAP
22 NOV. 1944
NORTH FLANK

VIUS CORP
Units in Square are
3700
Supporting Units
1600

VIUS CORP
Units in Square are
3700
Supporting Units
1600





SIXTH ARMY GROUP
SITUATION MAP

22 NOV. 1944

I FRENCH CORPS
Units in Contact
Supporting Units

SIXTH ARMY GROUP
SITUATION MAP

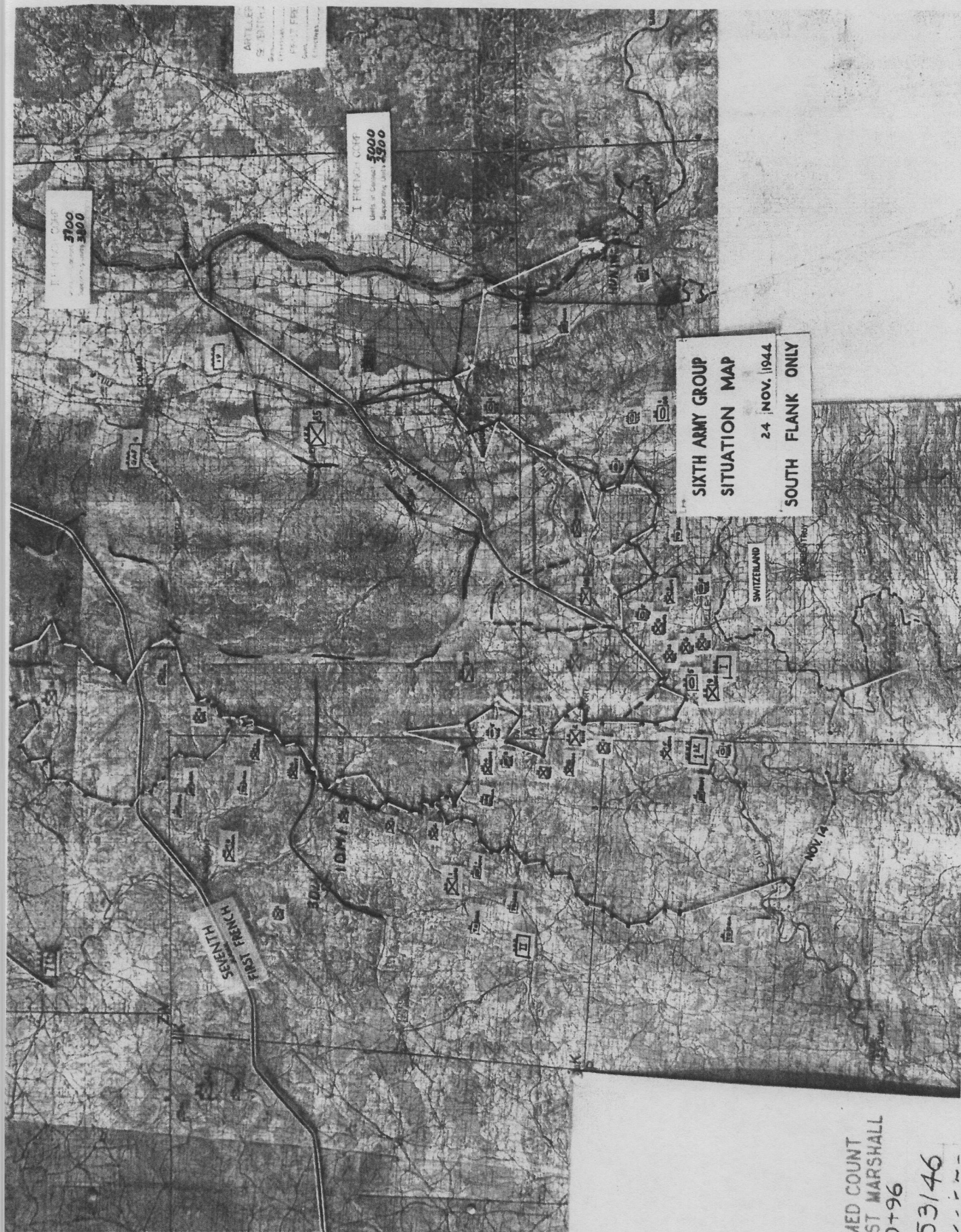
24 NOV. 1944

NORTH FLANK

XIUS CORP
2700
1600

IX CORP
3100
3000

SEVENTH
FIRST FRONT



MED COUNT
ST MARSHALL
D+96

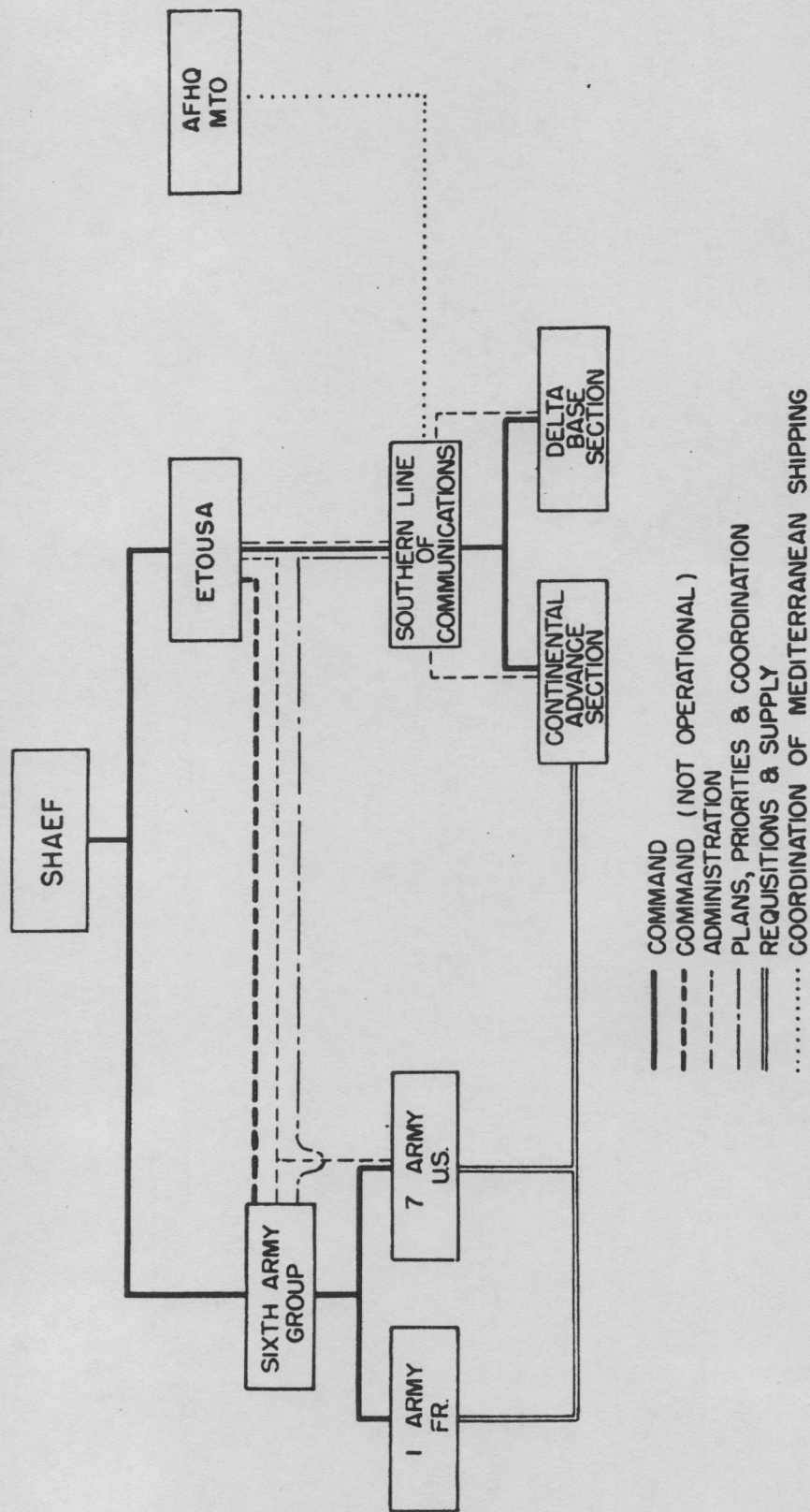
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COMMAND ADMINISTRATION & SUPPLY CHANNELS AS AFFECTING SIXTH ARMY GROUP

SECRET

SECRET

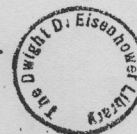


STAT DIVISION
OFFICE SGS 6 ARMY GROUP

SOURCE: G-4
COORDINATED WITH G-1, G-3, & AG

152. There was issued on 23 November a letter with a chart showing command, administration and supply channels to be used by Sixth Army Group.

153. On 25 November ETCUSA directed prompt movement of airborne elements of the First Airborne Task Force to SOISSONS, LYON and MOURMELON. (101)



154. Also on 25 November a revised table of allotment of grades and ratings was published. For the Headquarters, Headquarters Company, and Special Troops the total was 372 Officers, 23 Warrant Officers and 998 Enlisted Men an aggregate of 1393. (102)

155. The attacks launched by Seventh Army on 13 November and by First French Army on 14 November were governed by the directive in SCAF Message 114, amended as quoted in paragraph 111. This directive, in paragraph 7, called for taking advantage of any opportunities to "seize" bridgeheads East of the RHINE during the First Phase of the action while operations leading to their "capture" were reserved for the Second Phase. The term "seize" implied sudden action against little or no resistance.

156. Neither army had a reasonable chance to seize a bridgehead. On 24 November there were false reports of such a seizure opposite STRASBOURG, probably due to confusion with canal bridges. (103) The first of General Leclerc's tanks to approach the RHINE bridges were driven back by heavy fire from strong pill boxes guarding the approaches and the enemy made a determined stand in his bridgehead there for several days. Thus the necessary element of surprise was lost. Demolition charges were out of reach being placed in chambers in the interior of the stone bridge piers and the cables controlling them also were inaccessible being led out under the river to hidden control stations somewhere in the town of KEHL on the East bank. Moreover the SIEGFRIED defenses covering the bridges from the East bank were particularly strong and many of them cleverly concealed. In case a small force had been permitted to cross the bridge and then been cut off by blowing the bridge it could not have been supported by an assault crossing before about 1 December. (106)

157. The First French Army was not in possession of amphibious assault equipment adequate for a crossing of the RHINE. Timely request by Sixth Army Group for assault equipment adequate for RHINE crossings on a two army front had not been filled. There was hardly enough equipment for one army and this was properly allotted to Seventh Army whose zone was the more favorable for crossing from a technical viewpoint including danger to bridges from artificial flood ways. Moreover the distance from bridgehead to any important objectives would be much shorter. Although elements of the First French Army were first to reach the RHINE they did so as result of a deep narrow thrust and the "enemy in zone" had by no means been destroyed. For the time being it appeared that all elements of this army, less those required for operations near BORDEAUX, could be very profitably employed

in clearing the enemy from the area West of the RHINE

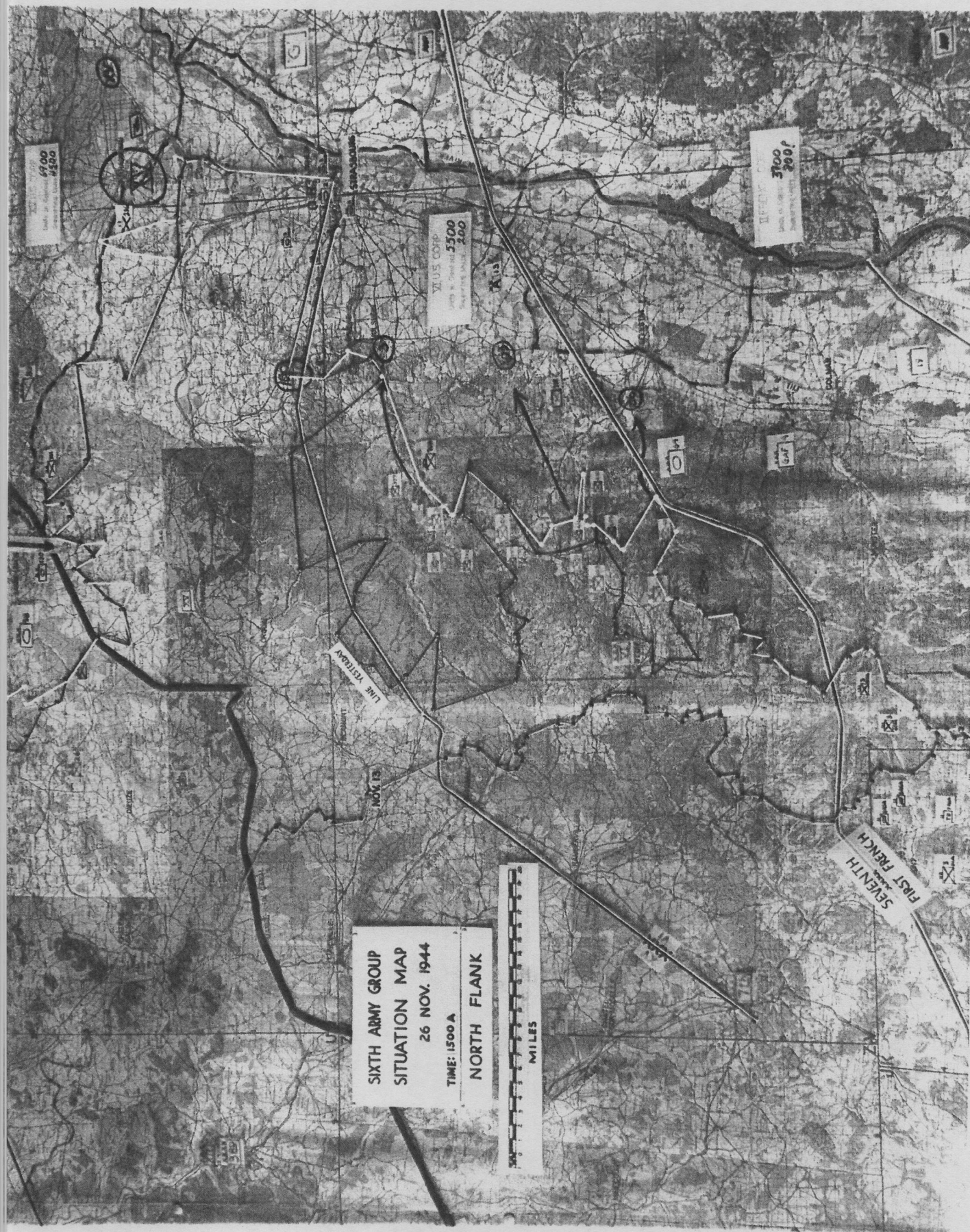
158. The situation with respect to the Seventh Army was somewhat different. Its mission included "protection of the Southern flank of the Central Group of Armies" (Twelfth Army Group) which was considered to include assistance on that flank in such form as the Twelfth Army Group Commander, General Bradley, considered most effective. Which would be most helpful? Continued operations West of the RHINE or a crossing and advance to the North. This was essentially a choice between emphasis on close-in support on the one hand and indirect support by wide envelopment on the other.

159. Other questions were raised. Since "operations for the capture of a bridgehead" were reserved for the SECOND PHASE, would General Eisenhower approve initiation of this phase by Sixth Army Group while the Northern and Central groups were still so far from the RHINE? The rapid conquest of the BELFORT and VOSGES barriers was, perhaps, an unforeseen development which would call for some adjustments to SHAEF's operational directives.

160. It was in Sixth Army Group zone alone that the twin barriers of the RHINE and the SIEGFRIED Line were both within range of immediate assault and General Patch was confident of the ability of his Seventh Army to breach them. He had amphibious assault equipment for about six assault battalions and this equipment could be brought to the RHINE by about 1 December. However, there was practically no reserve equipment.

161. G-2 estimated that when the place of crossing was known to the enemy he could, with little delay, bring three infantry and two armored divisions to attack the bridgehead. Subsequent build up of enemy strength might well require support from outside Sixth Army Group to exploit the break-through. The appropriate support might assume such proportions that it would effect a change of main effort from North to South.

162. These and other considerations led to a conference at VITTEL on the evening of 24 November. General Devers was anxious to make a crossing of the RHINE on the Seventh Army front but his basic mission of assisting Twelfth Army Group was a controlling factor and General Bradley preferred the maximum of close-in support West of the RHINE. To facilitate this, a new Army Group boundary was proposed by the two army group commanders and the proposals approved by General Eisenhower who participated in the conference. The new line turned sharply to the Northeast through the SIEGFRIED Line and then Eastward again to the RHINE, thereby reducing the width of the Twelfth Army Group zone of action in the vicinity of the SIEGFRIED defenses. Thus the early success of Sixth Army Group caused but little change in General Eisenhower's plans. His apparent decision was to continue operations for decisive defeat of the enemy West of the RHINE and to await a more favorable opportunity for opening the SECOND PHASE involving the capture of bridgeheads over the RHINE and deployment on the East bank.





5500
1500?

SIXTH ARMY GROUP
SITUATION MAP
26 NOV. 1944
TIME: 1500 A
SOUTH FLANK ONLY

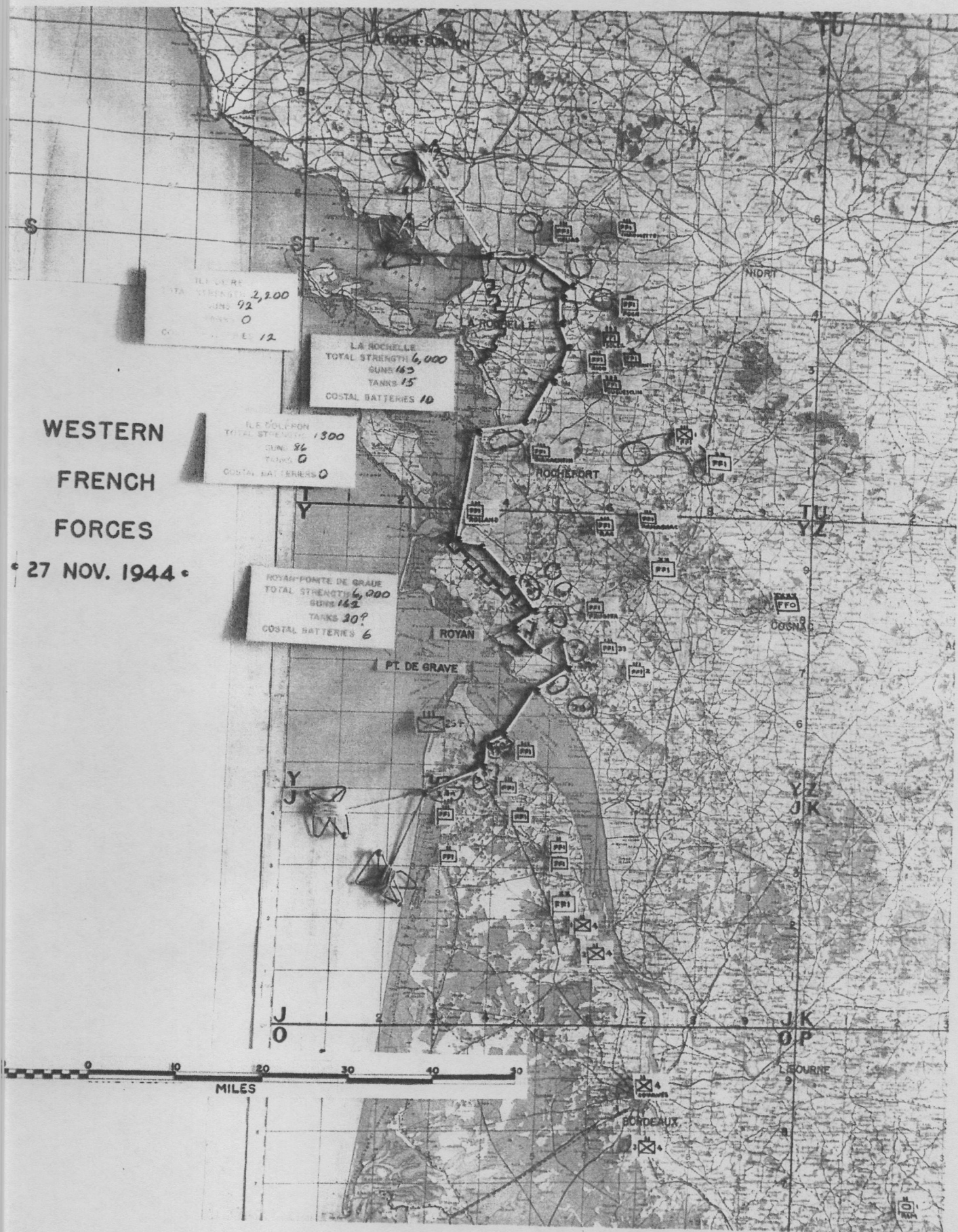


MED COUNT
ST MARSHALL
D+100

55168
68240
123408

WESTERN FRENCH FORCES

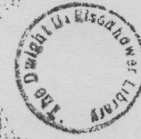
• 27 NOV. 1944 •



163. General Eisenhower, who had made a tour of inspection of the Seventh Army zone on 24 November, made a similar trip through the zone of the First French Army on the following day. The new plans adopted during the night of 24-25 November were announced in Sixth Army Group cable as follows:

TO FOR ACTION: SHAEF MAIN

FROM : SIXTH ARMY GROUP 26 November 1944



Readjustment of boundary between Sixth and Twelfth Army Groups was agreed at conference between Generals DEVERS and BRADLEY.

From front to rear: LANPARTHEITH (M-5311) (to Twelfth Army Group) - NIEDSHEIM GR (M-4208) (to Sixth Army Group) - GRUNSTADT (M-3107) (to Sixth Army Group) - EISENBERG (M-2407) (to Sixth Army Group) - MEHLINGEN (R-0899) (to Twelfth Army Group) - road junction (R-0196) (to Sixth Army Group) - RAMSTEIN (Q-8794) (to Sixth Army Group) - WINTERBACH (Q-8178) (to Twelfth Army Group) - WEISKIRCHEN (Q-7157) (to Twelfth Army Group) - ROHRBACH (Q-6649) (to Twelfth Army Group) - LORENZEN (Q-5939) (to Twelfth Army Group) - THAL (Q-5735) (to Sixth Army Group) - West of FINSTINGEN (Q-4828) (inclusive) no change.

2. Generals DEVERS and BRADLEY agreed that the Southern Group of Armies present mission assigned by para 10, SHAEF cable S-64375/SG693, 28 October 44. (SCAF number 114) be changed as follows:

A. The offensive to be continued, the SIEGFRIED LINE west of the RHINE to be breached, the enemy to be destroyed in zone, with deployment in strength across the RHINE.

B. Strong attack to be launched west of the PFALZER-WALD together with southern flank of Central Group of Armies to accomplish breaching of the SIEGFRIED LINE.

3. Present at the conference was General EISENHOWER, who has orally concurred.

4. As matter of urgency official confirmation is requested.

Cabled concurrence was received early on 27 November (104) and SHAEF's former directive was appropriately amended as follows:

FROM: SHAEF MAIN

TO : CG SIXTH ARMY GP AND OTHERS 27 November 1944

Cite SHGCT

(1) Follows amendment to our S-64375 (SCAF 114) dated 28 October. Absolute minimum of distribution will be given this message. Delivery only to the addressee, or to person designated to receive the message in his stead.

(2) Paragraph 10 of SCAF 114 to be deleted. Substitute therefor:-

"10. The Southern Group of Armies' mission is as follows:

(A) The offensive to be continued, the Siegfried Line West of the RHINE to be breached, the enemy to be destroyed in zone with deployment in strength across the RHINE with the intention of advancing later toward the North.

(B) Strong attack west of the PFALZERWALD to be launched together with Central Group of Armies' southern flank to make gap in the Siegfried Line."

(3) Change paragraph 11 (B) of SCAF 114 as follows:-

(B) Between Central and Southern Groups of Armies. From front to rear: LAMNERTHEIM (M-5311) to Twelfth Army Group - NIEDSHEIM GR (M-4208) - GRUNSTADT (M-3107) - EISENBERG (M-2407) all to Sixth Army Group - MEHLINGEN (R-0899) to Twelfth Army Group - road junction (R-0196) - RAMSTEIN (Q-8794) both to Sixth Army Group - WINTERBACH (Q-8178) - WEISKIRCHEN (Q-7157) - ROHRBACH (Q-6649) - LORENZEN (Q-5939) all to Twelfth Army Group - THAL (Q-5735) to Sixth Army Group - West of FINSTENGEN (Q-4828) inclusive no change.

(4) Acknowledgement requested by action addressees.

Attention is invited to the addition to paragraph 10 (A) thereof.

164. Enemy disorganization after twelve days of constant attack is described in the General Summary of Weekly Intelligence Summary Number 10 dated 25 November quoted below:

The combined attack of the First French and the Seventh US Army has completely disorganized the enemy's resistance. The swift advance resulted in the annihilation of two German Divisions, the capture of more than 15,000 prisoners, including several generals and members of Nineteenth Army Headquarters, guns and considerable equipment. The present disposition of the enemy remains chaotic. With both his flanks dangerously threatened, he cannot have any hope of reestablishing the required balance West of the RHINE. Even the commitment of one or two fresh major units could not materially change his situation, particularly if the weather permits constant air bombardment of the crossings.

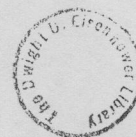
165. On 26 November Letter of Instructions Number Three was issued as follows:

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP

26 November 1944

SUBJECT: Letter of Instructions Number Three.

TO : First French Army.
Seventh Army.



1. a. See current Intelligence Summary.
- b. 21st and 12th Army Groups continue the offensive.
2. Sixth Army Group will continue the offensive, breach SIEG-FRIED LINE West of the RHINE, destroy the enemy in zone and deploy in strength across the RHINE, South of MANNHEIM.

BOUNDARIES:

a. Between 12th and 6th Army Groups:

West of FINSTINGEN (Q-4828) (inclusive) no change - THAL (Q-5735) (to 6 AG) - LORENZEN (Q-5939) (to 12 AG) - ROHRBACH (Q-6649) (to 12 AG) - WEISKIRCHEN (Q-7157) (to 12 AG) - WINTERBACH (Q-8178) (to 12 AG) - RAMSTEIN (Q-8794) (to 6 AG) - Road Junction (R-0196) (to 6 AG) - MEHLINGEN (R-0899) (to 12 AG) - EISENBERG (M-2407) (to 6 AG) - GRUNSTADT (M-3107) (to 6 AG) - GR (M-4208) (to 6 AG) - LAMPERTHEIM (M-5311) (to 12 AG).

b. Between Seventh Army and First French Army:

No change for the present. New boundary will be announ-

ced on or about 29 November which will place STRASBOURG in the zone of action of the First French Army.

c. South Flank:

SWISS Frontier.

3. a. First French Army.

- (1) Continue destruction of enemy in zone West of the RHINE. See Paras. 3 b (2), 3 b (3) and 3 x.
- (2) Protect South flank of Sixth Army Group.
- (3) When destruction of enemy in zone West of RHINE has been completed:
 - (a) Protect East flank of Sixth Army Group along West bank of RHINE in assigned zone.
 - (b) Not later than 0600 hours 30 November, relieve U.S. units committed by Seventh Army in First French Army zone. (See 3 b (3)).
 - (c) Assemble 1 DMI in VESOUL area by 2 December 1944 and refit the division for movement to Operation INDEPENDENCE by 7 December.
 - (d) Assemble 1 DB in VESOUL area by 5 December 1944 and refit the division for movement to Operation INDEPENDENCE by 10 December 1944.
 - (e) Move other units of First French Army scheduled for Operation INDEPENDENCE in accordance with instruction to be issued separately.
 - (f) Assemble First French Army (less forces indicated in Paras. (3) (a), (c), (d) and (e) for rest and refit. Prepare these forces for further offensive action by 15 December 1944.
- (4) Take advantage of any opportunity to seize and exploit a bridgehead across the RHINE at STRASBOURG with minimum forces.
- (5) Protect flank on Franco-Italian frontier in currently assigned sector.
- (6) Release and move the U.S. 240 mm How Bn with attached 8" gun sections and one U.S. 4.2" Chemical Mortar Bn currently operating with the First French Army at once, including available ammunition for these weapons.

b. Seventh Army.

- (1) Destroy enemy in zone West of RHINE, South of SIEGFRIED LINE, and complete regrouping rapidly.
- (2) Direct the action of 2nd French Armored Division South, West of the RHINE, at once. Pass it to command of C.G. First French Army on arrival in First French Army zone.
- (3) Assist First French Army in destroying enemy in its zone by committing not less than one RCT and not more than one Infantry Division into the First French Army zone on the axis: MOLSHEIM - COLMAR. Withdraw these forces into own zone of action by 0600 hours 30 November 1944.
- (4) Attack North with least possible delay, making main effort initially on the left and assist Third Army in breaching the SIEGFRIED LINE. Timing and exact location of attack will be coordinated by Seventh Army with Third Army and reported promptly to Sixth Army Group.
- (5) After breaching the SIEGFRIED LINE, prompt advantage will be taken of any opportunity to seize and exploit any unopposed bridgehead South of MANNHEIM. Failing to seize an unopposed bridgehead across the RHINE, South of MANNHEIM, be prepared to launch a coordinated attack across the RHINE in zone of action and deploy in strength East of the RHINE.
- (6) See Para. 3 a (6). Arrange details with First French Army at once.

- x.
- (1) Passage of command of 2nd French Armored Division from the Seventh Army to First French Army will be mutually arranged between Army Commanders. It will be accomplished promptly.
 - (2) Action of U.S. Forces exploiting in zone of action of First French Army will be as directed by C.G. Seventh Army. They will be withdrawn from zone of action of First French Army when exploitation has been completed or as directed in Paras. 3 a (3) (b) and 3 b (3), whichever is earliest.
 - (3) Lateral contact will be established and maintained as mutually arranged between Army Commanders.

4. Administrative Instructions will be issued separately.

5. No change in current Signal Instructions.

By Command of Lieutenant General DEVERS:

DAVID G. BARR,
Major General, G.S.C.,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ REUBEN E. JENKINS
REUBEN E. JENKINS,
Brigadier General, G.S.C.,
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3.

166. Under date of 29 November, on the eve of the transfer of the 2d Division Blindes from American Seventh Army command to First French Army, General Devers dispatched the following letter:

HEADQUARTERS
SIXTH ARMY GROUP
Office of the Commanding General
APO 23, U.S. Army

29 November 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : General JACQUES LECLERC, Commanding General,
2d Division Blindes.

It is with a feeling of great pride and satisfaction that I extend to you at this time my most heartfelt congratulations on the splendid efforts and achievements of the 2d Division Blindes in the Battle of Germany. Since the beginning, your Division has spearheaded the thrust destined to drive the enemy from their last lines of defense on French soil. Their elan and esprit de corps, the brilliance of their attacks and their persistence in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles of terrain and weather have won the admiration of all, and are an inspiration to the forces of all the Allied nations. Day by day, under magnificent leadership and through ceaseless and untiring efforts against the German invaders, you and your Division add to the glory of the French Army, and, by your unyielding determination to fight on to final victory, are proving yourselves worthy of its most glorious traditions.

/s/ JACOB L. DEVERS
JACOB L. DEVERS,
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

167. At noon 30 November the Command Post of Headquarters Seventh Army closed at EPINAL and opened at SARREBOURG. The rear echelon of the headquarters remained at EPINAL.

168. During November, Sixth Army Group units reported a total of 19,932 battle casualties, of which 3,103 were killed, 15,282 wounded, 1,538 missing and 9 captured. Major casualty figures were about equally divided between the Seventh Army and the First French Army. (105) Extracts from personnel statistics for the month are listed below:

SIXTH ARMY GROUP STATISTICS NOVEMBER 1944 . . .

Includes only the combat divisions of Seventh US and First French Armies

	1 Nov	30 Nov
Seventh Army		
Assigned Strength.	171,555	209,083
Effective Strength	165,410	202,610
Infantry Shortage.	2,602	4,031
First French Army		
Assigned Strength.	113,079	112,552
Effective Strength	108,996	103,773
Infantry Overage	480	
Infantry Shortage.		4,892*
American		
Cumulative Casualties.	48,116	72,917
Cumulative Replacements.	36,849	55,352
French		
Cumulative Casualties.	35,263	55,867
Cumulative Replacements.	40,742	58,840*
Cumulative Figures on Prisoners of War		
Captured by Americans.	47,713	64,482
Captured by French	58,415	70,705

*There were considerable overages in French units other than Infantry.

Statistical representation made
by the Eisenhower Library for
preservation purposes.

169. Extracts from the G-1 After Action Report for November are given below:
 These figures include Corps and Army units and all troops assigned to Sixth Army Group.

	U.S. FORCES	FRENCH FORCES	TOTAL
Killed	1,383	1,719	3,102
Wounded	8,373	6,899	15,272
Missing	1,247	291	1,538
Captured	9		9
Total Battle Casualties	11,012*	8,909	19,921
Non-Battle Casualties including Sick (Hospitalized)	15,960	15,726	31,686
Total Casualties	26,972	24,635	51,607
Sick and Wounded returned to Units.	8,452	8,006	16,458
Balance (Loss for the Month)	18,520	16,541	35,149
Reinforcements received	12,710	12,541	25,251
Balance - Remaining Deficiency for the Month	5,810	4,088	9,898
T/O Strength of Command	231,506	244,749	476,255
Assigned Strength	228,014	258,159	486,173
Actual Strength	220,313	242,100	462,413
Infantry Shortage	4,108	4,952	9,060
Prisoners of War Captured during the Month	16,851	12,375	29,226
Prisoners of War Captured (Cumulative)	64,482	70,705	135,187

*Minor differences from preceding figures result from omission of figures for Canadian troops (Effective strength 642).

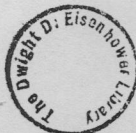
170. On 30 November Administrative Letter Number 3 was published as follows:

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP
APO 23, U. S. ARMY

ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER)

NUMBER

3)



30 November 1944

1. Top priority for reconstruction and rehabilitation of railroads is given to the line LUNEVILLE-SARRESBOURG-SAVERNE-STRASBOURG with branch to HAGENAU. Second priority is given to the line AILLERVILLERS-LURE-BELFORT-MULHOUSE. The rail line EPINAL-BRUYERES-ST DIE-STRASBOURG will be rehabilitated beyond BRUYERES only if time and materials are not required for other lines.

2. The supply of the First French Army will continue from existing railheads which will be moved forward as conditions permit. Requisitions for maintenance of the First French Army will be adjusted to conform with the troop strength of the Rearmament Program units remaining after withdrawal of the INDEPENDENCE Troop List.

3. The responsibility for supply and evacuation of the 2d French Armored Division will pass from the Seventh Army to the First French Army on a date to be arranged between the Army Commanders. Requisitions for maintenance will be adjusted accordingly. After passage of command of 2d French Armored Division from Seventh Army to First French Army, supply and evacuation of the Division will be accomplished in accordance with existing policies and instructions applicable to the First French Army.

4. Boundary between the Armies and rear boundaries of the Combat Zone will be established by this headquarters in separate instructions.

5. NOTE: This letter is to accompany Letter of Instruction Number 3, this headquarters, dated 27 November 1944.

By command of Lieutenant General DEVERS:

/s/ DONALD H. BAKER
DONALD H. BAKER,
Lt Colonel, AGD,
Actg Adjutant General.

Electrostatic copy. Original document removed from files for preservation purposes.